PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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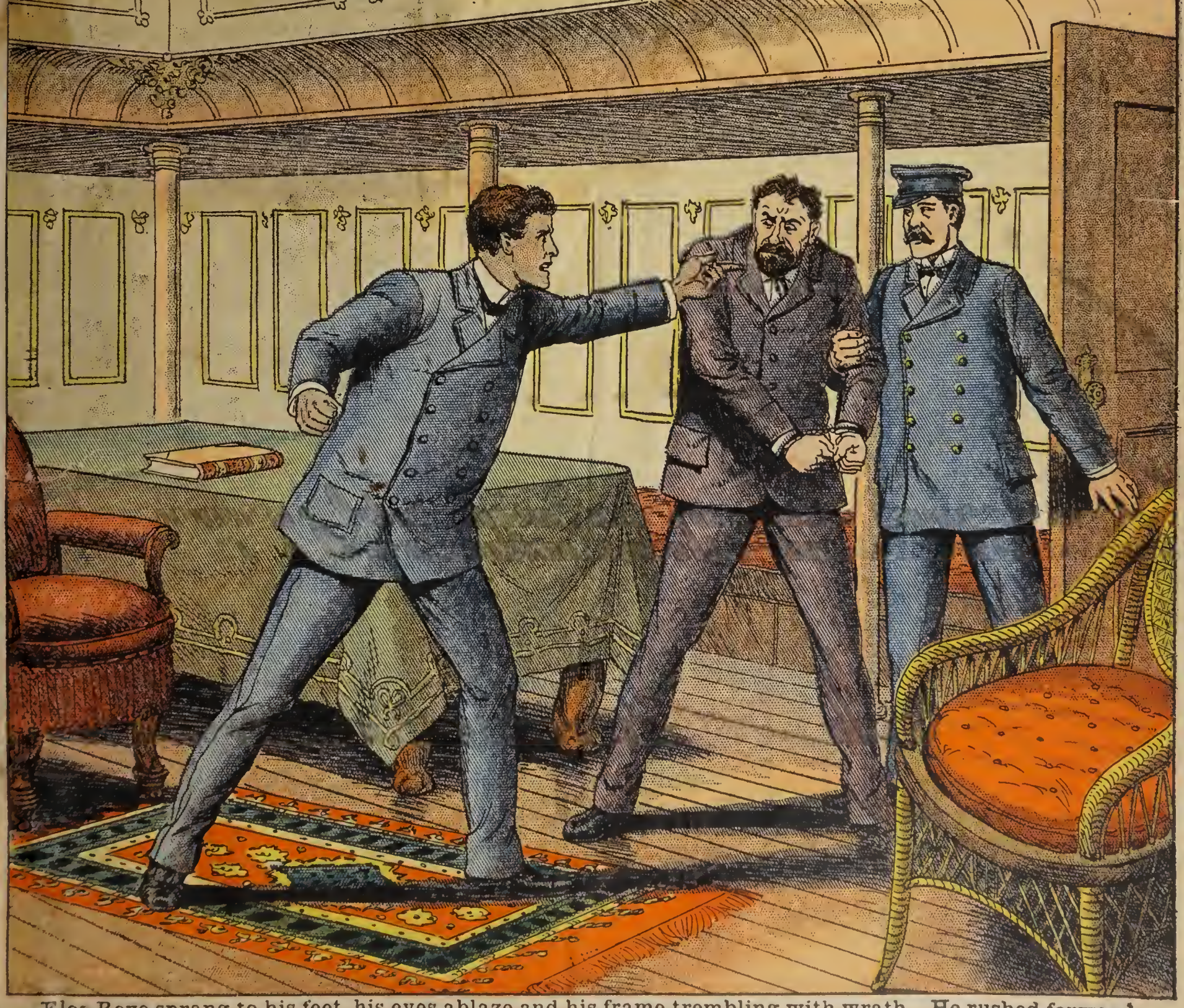
No. 362. NEW YORK, MAY 10, 1905. Price 5 Cents.

A MILLIONAIRE AT 18;

OR, THE AMERICAN BOY CROESUS.

By H. K. SHACKLEFORD.



Elon-Reve sprang to his feet, his eyes ablaze and his frame trembling with wrath. He rushed forward and, pointing an accusing finger within an inch of the prisoner's nose, exclaimed: "You inhuman brute! You dare to talk of vengeance!"

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(Continued on page 3 of cover.)

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A Millionaire at 18

OR,

The American Boy Croesus.

By H. K. SHACKLEFORD.

CHAPTER I.

THE OLD CASTLE AND ITS PRISONERS.

But a few miles from the town of Wick on the coast of the highlands of Scotland stands an old castle, the age of which is known to but few people of the present day. It is not known who built it, though the records of that part of the country speak of it as far back as the eleventh century, when it was ten mentioned as the "Strong Castle," and well it deserved the name. It stood where the waves of the sea could break against its everlasting foundations. It was not only founded on a rock, but was built of stone from base to parapet.

At the time of which we write, some twenty years ago, it was no longer the home of a Scottish chief whose clan rallied at his call. Its grand banquet hall no longer resounded with the song and story of brave deeds by brave men.

It was now a prison.

Men were sent there whose cases could not be tried in public or could not be tried at all. It was one of those secret prisons that are to be found where kings and queens hold sway and men have no rights a crown is bound to respect.

There were five prisoners in the old castle at the time mentioned. There may have been more. It is more than probable that a score of hapless beings were incarcerated there, but as each one was kept locked in a separate room all the year round, we have no knowledge of their exact number. But we do know of five, and as one of that number survived to tell the story of their terrible fate, we have their names, ages, and nationality.

One night a great storm raged on the coast of North Scotland. It was the worst the oldest inhabitant could remember. The great waves broke against the base of the old castle with a deafening roar. The lightning lit up the scene with a fierce vividness that would have appalled the stoutest hearts within the old, gray walls, had they been permitted to gaze upon it.

Suddenly a crash came that startled the inmates.

A thunderbolt struck the wall on the side fronting the sea, and went through it as smoothly as if a great cannon ball had done it.

It passed to the next wall and made a similar hole, a little nearer the floor, as it came in a slanting direction, and went on to the third wall, through that to two more, where it went down and disappeared in the earth or rock beneath the castle. It had knocked a hole through five stone walls. Each hole was large enough for an ordinary man to crawl through. The hole in the outer wall, where the bolt first struck, was some ten feet above the floor of the room. In the second it was about seven, the third five, the fourth three, and the last one was made just a little above the floor.

"What's that!" cried a voice in the fifth room.

Total darkness filled the place.

"It was the lightning, I think," said a voice in the next room.

It was the first time one prisoner ever heard the voice of another in the other room of the castle.

"Who are you!" the first speaker cried out. "I never heard your voice before?"

"I am an unfortunate prisoner. Who are you, in God's name?"

"I am an unfortunate prisoner, too," was the reply. "But how is it we hear each other's voice now?"

"I think the lightning much have knocked a hole in the walls. Pieces of stone are scattered all over my room."

"And mine, too. Oh, I have not heard a human voice in five years! Ah! I have found the hole! Give me your hand and let me feel it!"

Two hands met in the breach, and clasped in an eager, hearty shake.

"Come through! Come through!" said the men in the other room. "The bolt came from the outside, and may have cut an outlet for us!"

"My God! Can it be! If so God has sent his angel to open our prison door for us!" and the man from the fifth room crawled through into the fourth, and was clasped in the arms of the man in there.

Just then another flash of lightning came and gave the two prisoners a dim view of each other. Both were clad in rags, and haggard-looking in the extreme. One was a man with long hair and beard. The other was a youth of eighteen, with a beardless face and long hair.

In that living tomb were no razors or scissors, or tailors.

"Why, you are a boy!" said the man.

"Yes, and yet I feel as if I ought to be one hundred years old. How long have you been here?"

"I don't know. I have lost my reckoning of time. I have

been here for years, it seems to me. Why did they send you here?"

"I don't know, fully, and——"

"Hello! Who are you?" came from the third.

"We are prisoners!" returned the youth who had been interrupted.

"So am I. In heaven's name let's see if the lightning has not come to our rescue! Come in here. I am hurt by the stones falling on me."

The two felt around till they found the opening in the wall, and crawled through into the third room. There they were met by another man who caught them in his arms and hugged them, as though they were his long-lost brothers.

"How are you hurt?" the man with the long beard asked.

"I am bruised all over by the stones which fell on me. My head is cut in several places, and covered with blood."

"Can't you come in here!" cried a voice from the second room. "I can hear your voices in there. In God's name come in and let's all die together."

"We don't want to die yet," said the man with the long beard. "We'll come through if we can," and he at once began climbing up through the hole in the wall.

In a few moments he had gone through and the other two followed him.

"Four of us? I haven't been allowed to speak to a human being in years!" cried the poor fellow in No. 2, and he danced around them like a lunatic, so great was his joy at being able to hear human voices once more.

The man in No. 4, with the long beard, went feeling around the walls of the room in quest of the hole made by the thunderbolt.

When he found it he could barely reach the lower side of it by standing on tip-toes.

"We can go through it if we can get up to it," he said to the others.

A groan came from room No. 1.

"Hello in there! Are you hurt?"

"I am dying," came back in a feeble voice.

"Were you hurt by the lightning?"

"No; I am slowly dying of a fever."

"We'll come in and help you in some way," said Long Beard. "Here, let me stand on your back so I can go through."

"Yes," said No. 4. "Climb on my back and go through."

He went through.

No. 3 followed him.

"Now let's tie our blankets together, so the last man can climb through," said No. 2.

It was done, and No. 4 carried the end of a blanket with him as he went through the hole. Once inside the room he held on to the blanket till the last one had climbed through by means of it.

Then all four went to the side of the man on a bed of straw in a corner of the room. A vivid flash of lightning came and revealed his face to the four haggard faces about him.

He was a man well advanced in years. His hair and beard were snow white, and his frame almost that of a skeleton.

"I am dying," he said, in a feeble voice. "God, in his great mercy, has sent his lightning to make a way for you to come to me that I should not die alone, and my secret with me, in the darkness."

"Cheer up; you may get well yet," said one of the prisoners.

"No, it can't be. I am going. My life has been ebbing away for days and weeks. I am going on this tide. I—I want to leave my secret with you. Listen while I have strength to speak. My strength is going fast. I have the secret of untold riches, but I shall never live to use them. I give them to you. Come nearer and listen. Mark well my words," and he drew No. 5 close to him as he spoke. The others knelt on the stone floor by the bed of straw and listened too.

"My name is Joseph Horworth. I was born nearly sixty years ago at Plymouth, England. When I was a stout lad I went to sea, soon becoming an able seaman. I sailed to almost every port in the world, and, like most seafaring men, laid by no money for old age. Yet on one of my sojourns in port at the home of my birth I married a girl I had long loved. She is dead now, but our daughter, named Edith, was alive when I started on my last voyage. I was on board the Royal George when she was dashed to pieces on the rocks near Shathy Head, on the north coast of Scotland, and was the only one of her ill-fated crew and passengers who escaped alive. The Rajah of Oolah, the richest prince of India, was on board with his great retinue of servants, and his vast fortune in diamonds and jewels. The Government of England had bought his kingdom on condition that he left it and resided in England. He was among the lost. His chest of jewels was cast up by the waves with me. I buried it in the sand of a small cavern in the base of the crags, near the mouth of a cove which is surrounded by high cliffs on three sides. On the right of the cove is a sharp peak of gray stone, pointing skyward from the top of the cliff. On the beach in front of the cavern where I buried the chest is a big black bowlder. Get it in line with the peak, and the little cavern is directly behind you.

"I had not had it well hidden before wreckers came. But they did not find it. They found plenty of other treasures to tempt them.

"I was sent to Glasgow, but was arrested in the night and sent here, and here I have been ever since. I do not even know where I am. I—I—ah! I have seen your faces by the flash of lightning. They are the last I shall ever see in the world."

"You may live to see your daughter's face yet," said number 4. "This cool air coming in through the hole made by the lightning will make you feel better. We feel better ourselves."

The old man made no reply.

They waited some minutes for him to speak again, and then a flash of lightning came and lit up the dungeon-like scene once more, to let them see that he was dead—was free at last!

They sat awe-struck on the cold stones and in profound silence for some minutes more, which was finally broken by one of them saying:

"He is gone. We must go too. Let's look to our own safety," and he began trying to devise some means of escaping from the prison.

CHAPTER II.

THE ESCAPE OF THE PRISONERS.

The prisoners had seen, during the repeated flashes of lightning, that the hole in the outer wall, made by the thunderbolt, was nearly ten feet above the floor. They also saw that the hole was amply large enough for them to crawl through—if they could get up to it.

"How can we get out?" No. 2 asked. "We can't reach up so high, and we have no ladder."

"Easy enough," said No. 5, in quick reply. "We can stand on each other's shoulders and crawl through."

"But how will the last man get through?"

"Tie our blankets together for a rope. The three outside can hold on to it for the last man to climb through."

"That is good sense," remarked No. 4. "We ought to get to work at once. The storm is dying out, and we must get away before the jailer comes around to see what damage has been done."

"Ah! You have trifled with me then! Is that the custom of business men of this country?"

"No. I did not mean to trifle with you. I think the directors will confirm the sale, and——"

"Then give me a receipt for the money, and lay the matter before your board of directors," and he stood waiting for the receipt, which the manager finally wrote out and handed to him.

"Be so kind as to inform me of the action of the board as well as the arrival of the vessel in port," said the young stranger, as he placed the receipt in his vest pocket and walked out of the office.

The manager actually leaned back in his chair and gasped for breath. In all his experience he had never run across a visitor like unto him. Who was he? Where did he come from?

"Elos-Reve! Elos-Reve! I never heard the name before. He carries millions about in his pockets as I do pounds," and he shook his head and rang for his confidential man.

The confidential man was amazed at the story he heard from his chief.

"Send a man to the Queen's Arms to see what he can find out about him," ordered the chief, and the confidential man obeyed. He went himself, and reported, when he came back:

"They don't know who he is, sir. He has the finest suite of rooms in the house, a body servant who will answer no questions. The manager of the hotel thinks he is an Eastern prince traveling incognito."

"That can't be, for he speaks English without the least foreign accent."

"Some great scholars do that in many languages, sir," remarked the confidential man.

"Yes, yes, I suppose they do. Well, well, I haven't had such a shock since the last wreck on our line. I would give 100 pounds to know who he is. He is young, too, not over twenty-five years, perhaps."

"Certainly not over that, sir."

Ten days later the sale had been confirmed by the directors of the company. The steamer had arrived, and had been transferred to its new owner.

Captain John McLeod suddenly found himself on the eve of being without a ship. He called at the hotel to see the owner, and asked:

"To whom shall I turn over the command of the ship, sir?"

"To nobody," was the reply. "Keep command yourself till further orders, at double the pay the company gave you."

The captain made a profound bow, saying:

"I am much honored, sir."

"You are a faithful man. I have full confidence in you. I want you to select none but the best men for the crew. They are to wear uniforms, and must be quiet, sober men. I want sixty men in the crew, besides the engineer and stokers. Get them while alterations are going on."

The captain went away a happy man. He knew he would have two or three months in port, which pleased him very much, indeed.

At the hotel the dark stranger with the strange name and limitless wealth was the cynosure of all eyes. People watched him come and go and whispered to each other. Yet nobody dared to intrude. But the government feared that some member of a reigning family was in England incognito, and great worry was the result. Spies were set to watch him, and everywhere he went they were shadowing him.

One day Elos-Reve met a tall, dignified-looking man in the hotel, and asked the manager who he was.

"He is Justice Wales—one of our magistrates," was the reply.

"I thought I had met him before. I would be pleased to make his acquaintance."

"I shall be pleased to present him to you, sir."

That evening Justice Wales was presented to him. He shook hands with him and they talked and drank wine together.

One day when the great steamship was finished, Elos-Reve said to the justice:

"I should be pleased to show you my yacht. Come with me and break a bottle of wine on her deck."

"With the greatest pleasure, sir," replied the justice.

They rode down to the dock in a carriage and went aboard the steamer. It was like a floating palace. The justice was profuse in his praise of everything he saw.

"This is to be my hotel," said Elos-Reve to him. "I have had it altered to suit my purpose. I can entertain my guests in my own house, you see, and give them a bit of sea air, too."

"A brilliant idea, but an expensive one," returned the justice.

"Expense is nothing to me. I wish to have my friends enjoy life with me, and I think I can bring that about under present arrangements. Here I have a great ball-room, a banquet hall, concert hall, a promenade—everything needed for comfort and enjoyment. Come and see the wine vault," and he led the way into a cabin gorgeously furnished. Opening an inner door, he disclosed a flight of stairs leading down to another door. Down they went. Elos-Reve opened the door, disclosing a room dark as a dungeon.

"Step in, please."

Justice Wales stepped into the room.

Elos-Reve gave a sardonic laugh, and closed the door, making him a prisoner.

"That is number one," he said, and he turned and reascended the stairs.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT FOLLOWED THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE JUSTICE.

When Elos-Reve came up into the cabin again he did not go into the main saloon of the great yacht. There were those in there who would have seen him. He turned and went through a door that opened on to the promenade on the outside.

Seeing no one out there he stepped back into the cabin, took up a bag, which had a fifty-pound stone inside of it, and stepping cautiously outside again, cast it overboard into the sea.

It made a loud splash and instantly sank to the bottom.

"Help! Help!" he cried, at the top of his voice. "Man overboard!"

Instantly there was a rush of the officers and men to the spot.

"The justice has fallen overboard!" he exclaimed, as Captain McLeod came to his side.

"Man the lifeboat, men!" sung out the captain, and the well-trained men sprang to obey him.

"Stand by to throw a rope!" sung out the first mate.

The boat was lowered, and a seaman stood by to cast a rope the moment the man in the water should rise to the surface.

Bubbles came up from the bottom, but no man, as the minutes passed by.

"I fear he is drowned, Captain," said Elos-Reve. "No man can live so long under water."

"I fear so, too, sir," returned the captain, an anxious look on his face. "How did it happen?"

"He leaned over too far and lost his balance. He went down head foremost. Is there no way to save him?"

"Not unless we could see him. He must have been swept under the ship."

The men in the boat stood ready to lend any assistance in the event of the man rising to the surface.

"I'll give the man who brings him up a thousand pounds!" cried Elos-Reve, from the deck of the steamer, his face betraying great anxiety.

Three men dived from the boat, eager to win the reward. They all came up, got fresh breaths, and went down again.

But all in vain.

The justice was not found, and the news spread that he was drowned. In a little while a very large crowd of people gathered on the dock, gazing at the men who were now making ready to drag for the body.

The drowning caused a great deal of excitement in the city, and a police official came on board and interviewed Elos-Reve as to how the accident happened. He told the same story he had told the captain—that the justice had leaned too far over and lost his balance.

Then came a Government official, who demanded to know who he was and where he came from.

"I am an American citizen," he said.

"Have you a passport?"

"No."

"You should have one," said the official, shaking his head.

"But I have not, and that is the end of it."

"Is there no one here who knows who you are?"

"No, I believe not."

"Can you——"

"You have asked questions enough. Go ashore at once, sir."

"I will not go until I think my duty has been performed," replied the official, in a pompous sort of way.

Elos-Reve turned to the second mate and said:

"Have this man set ashore at once."

The mate summoned four seamen.

"I am a Queen's officer!" said the official. "Touch me at your peril!"

"Put him ashore at once," said the young owner of the biggest and most costly private yacht in the world.

The men took him up bodily and carried him ashore, where they set him down without any unnecessary violence. Then they returned on board, leaving him in a towering rage.

"I'll have every man on board locked up!" he cried, shaking his fist at the owner of the great yacht.

Elos-Reve made no reply other than a smile of contempt, and turned away to promenade the deck.

A few hours later another official came on deck and demanded to see the owner of the yacht.

"What do you want?" Elos-Reve asked.

"Did you order your men to put one of Her Majesty's officers on shore?" the official asked.

"I ordered them to put a very impertinent fellow ashore," was the reply. "I don't know whether he was an officer or not. He did not show any authority as such. Why do you ask?"

"Complaint has been made by an officer that he had been so treated."

"Have you got the complaint with you?"

"No. I have come to make inquiry about it."

"The man was impertinent. I permitted him to make investigation till he began questioning me about my private life, record and everything else, as though I was on the witness stand in open court. I refused to answer, he became impertinent. I ordered him ashore. He refused to go, and then I had him put off by my men. Did I do wrong?"

"Yes. He is an officer of the Queen's government."

"Bah! I have rights that even the Queen is bound to respect," and he looked the astonished official full in the face as he spoke.

"But you have no right to lay violent hands on a Queen's officer," said the official, his face reddening.

"It is the common law of England that an Englishman's home is his castle. I am on the deck of my yacht. It is my castle. If the Queen's officers invade my castle I'll throw them overboard as quickly as I would any other people."

"Do you defy the law?"

"No; I uphold and obey it."

"You don't seem to know much about the law."

"Perhaps not. I know my rights, though, and will defend them as long as I have men and money at my command."

"Would you resist arrest?"

"Yes, unless the arrest was made under the full process of law. If you bring a warrant properly made out, seting forth my crime, I'll submit. Otherwise I won't."

The official went away, and that was the last they heard of him. The unknown American was still shadowed, for the government detective had failed to make him out.

The next day he said to Captain McLeod:

"I am going away for a day or two. Let nobody come on board who does not belong here, unless your judgment approves."

"Your orders shall be obeyed, sir."

"They are not orders. I leave everything to your discretion."

He then procured the garb of a common sailor and donned it. He looked every inch a sailor lad of some five-and-twenty years of age, though he was not near so old.

He gave the detective the slip and went at once to the railroad station, where he took the train for Plymouth.

That old town by the sea was soon reached, and he hunted up a sailor's boarding-house. An old tar piloted him to one, where he procured quarters, paying a week in advance.

"Looking for a ship, mate?" the old tar queried.

"I am looking for the daughter of an old shipmate," he replied.

"Ay, going to splice, eh?"

"I don't know. I've never seen her yet. Her name is Horworth. If I can find some of the old residents here I might be able to find her."

"Go down to old Mother Grady's," said the old tar. "She will know her if anybody does."

"Where is she anchored?"

"Down by the quay. She keeps a shop down there. Everybody knows old Mother Grady."

He made his way down there, and inquired for old Mother Grady's place.

An urchin showed him the shop, and he went in.

Old Mother Grady was a big, fat, jolly, red-faced old woman, of perhaps sixty years of age. She was a general favorite with all the sailors who frequented her shop for outfits and knick-knacks before going on a voyage.

"Well, my lad," said the old lady, on seeing him come in, "what is it this time?"

"I have come in to ask you to help me find the daughter of an old shipmate of mine, mother," he said. "Her name is Edith Horworth. Her father was Joseph Horworth."

"Ay, I know him. Is he dead, poor man?"

"Yes, he is dead, and I have a message for her from him."

"She is sewing on sails down in Ben Croly's shop," said the old woman, "and as likely a lass as ever you see. I'll send for her to come up here, and——"

"Pray don't go to that trouble, mother. I'll go down there and see her myself," and he went out and hunted up Croly's sail loft. When he found it he went in and asked the proprietor if a girl named Edith Horworth worked there.

"Yes," was the reply. "What do you want of her?"

"I want to see her. I have a message for her from her dead father."

"Why don't you go to her home and tell her, instead of coming here to interrupt her work?"

The young sailor drew a pound note from his pocket and said:

"Pay yourself out of that for her lost time and send her down. She won't work any more to-day when she hears of her father's death."

CHAPTER V.

THE OLD SAILOR'S DAUGHTER.

The sordid sailmaker looked at the money in silence for a moment or two as if debating with himself whether or not to take it, and then as if ashamed of himself, said:

"Keep your money," and then he went to the foot of the stairs and called out:

"Horworth!"

A minute later a neat-looking girl, plainly dressed, with pretty face and large blue eyes, came running downstairs, a look of uncertainty on her face.

"Are you the daughter of Joe Horworth?" the dark-faced young sailor asked.

"Yes, sir," she replied, looking into his eyes as if showing her eagerness to hear what next he would say.

"Put on your bonnet and go to your home with me," said he. "I have a message for you from him."

"I—I can't leave my work, sir," she stammered, looking around at the proprietor.

"Yes, you can go," growled old Croly. "But come early to-morrow to make up for lost time."

She ran back and got her bonnet, and a moment later joined the young sailor, whom she thought the handsomest she had ever seen.

"I have not seen or heard from daddy for years," she said. "I had believed him dead."

"He is dead," said the young sailor.

She stopped, gazed into his face, and turned deathly pale.

"I was with him when he died," he said. "He gave you his blessing, and asked me to bring you his effects and look after you for his sake."

She buried her face in her hands and wept.

"Don't cry. The old man sleeps peacefully now. He is at rest. I have come to give you rest also. I have brought you his fortune."

"His fortune!" said she, looking up. "He never had more than his wages for his fortune. I would rather have him with me than all his wages."

"Well, come home and hear my story. Don't cry. He has been dead quite a while now," and he tendered her his arm, which she took, and together they made their way to her humble home in the family of a stevedore.

There in the little parlor he had her tell him the story of her life. It had been one of toil ever since she had been old enough to work.

She now earned but a few pence a week over her board.

"You have never married?" he asked.

"No."

"Are you engaged to marry any one?"

"No. No man has ever asked me to be his wife."

"How old are you now?"

"I am twenty-two years old."

"You have worked hard. You shall rest now. Your father has left you a fortune. He had been shipwrecked on an island, where he found immense diamonds. He was rescued, brought them away with him in a little bag made of seal-skin. When he was dying he confided it to my care. I sold the diamonds for Bank of England notes. Here is a draft for 1,000 pounds. There are ninety-nine more like it in the bank at Liverpool for you," and he laid the bank-note in her hand as he spoke.

She was utterly bewildered. She had never seen such a sum of money before in all her life. Taking it up she read it slowly, to make sure she was not dreaming."

"You are rich now, Edith Horworth," he said. "How I would like to kiss a rich young lady."

She sprang up, threw her arms around his neck, and kissed him.

"That for this good news!" she cried. "You might have kept it yourself, and I would never have known of it."

"Yes, I might, only I am not that kind of a man," he replied. "I am your guardian, you know, though you are of age, and your own mistress," and he laughed, chucked her under the chin, and tried to look wise.

"I shall obey you in everything," she said.

"Good! I am glad to hear that. I want to tell you what to do with yourself and your fortune."

"I'll do just what you tell me to."

"Well, buy yourself a fine house and live like a rich lady should, and hire a teacher to instruct you in all the accomplishments of polite society. Don't let any man come courting you till you have come out as a perfect lady in the matter of accomplishments. You are a lady now at heart, but you would be lost in the society of the rich. I'll get a lawyer to look after all this for you to-morrow."

That night the happy girl dreamed of the handsome young sailor who had brought her fortune to her.

He did not dream of her, but he thought a good deal of her before he fell asleep.

The next day he hunted up an old and very respectable lawyer in the town, and told him about the fortune of the old sailor's daughter. He agreed to take charge of both, and carry out his wishes in regard to her education.

When he called on Edith again he found a messenger there from old Croly, the sail-maker, telling her that if she did not come to work at once she would lose her place.

"Tell your master," said the young sailor, "that she will not come to work any more—that she is the richest woman in Plymouth, and will now take a rest."

The messenger returned, and his message nearly knocked the old sailmaker off his feet. The other girls soon heard of it, and that night they came to the boarding-house to see her about it.

The young sailor gave each girl a ten-pound note, and told them to keep it for a wedding outfit. Edith was the happiest girl in the world at that moment.

Everything having been arranged in regard to the girl and the money, the young sailor took leave of her to go back to Liverpool.

"Shall I ever see you again?" she asked.

"Yes, if we both live," he replied. "I shall come and see you again. Remember your promise. Don't let any man come courting you until you are ready to come out into society."

"I shall not forget it. I shall let you know if any man tries to court me."

"Do so, and study hard, for I want you to go round the world with me when the teacher is through with you. Will you go?"

"Yes."

"Then good-by."

"Good-by."

Thus they parted.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BOY CROESUS IN NEW YORK.

Captain McLeod was pacing the deck of the Re wondering where the mysterious owner was, when the er tapped him on the arm, and asked:

"Has everything gone well since I left you, capt"

"God bless me, sir!" gasped the captain. "Where id you come from?"

"I came from on shore, of course, but you have nswered my question."

"Everything has gone well on board, sir. I don't kw how it has been on shore."

"We have nothing to do with things on shore."

"I hope not, sir. But they have been very much rried on shore about you, sir."

"The detectives, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir. They have missed you, and have been rting about like a school of herring with a shark in their idst."

Elos-Reve laughed and said:

"I am glad I gave them some amusement. Have the ried to come on board?"

"Yes, sir; but I ordered them off."

"Well, don't bother with them any mor. Have we erything necessary on board for a voyage to New York?"

"Everything, sir."

"Very well. We'll start at noon to-morow."

The captain bowed, and the young man left him to go to his quarters, which was the finest on board the vessel. It had a very complete library of books, so arranged that no movement of the ship could displace them.

In this magnificent room he sat down and gave way o a long train of thought. Suddenly he tapped a small electric knob and a servant promptly appeared.

"Send the steward to me."

The servant bowed and retired.

The steward came in, closing the door behind him.

"How is the justice?" Elos-Reve asked.

"He is in good health, yet in despair, sir," replied he steward.

"What do you give him to eat?"

"Nothing but bread and water, sir."

"What does he say?"

"He says nothing. He simply begs to see you."

"What have you told him?"

"That you would see him in good time."

"That was right. If you let any one know of this you know what the consequences will be."

"Yes, sir. There is no danger of that."

"He will have some company when we get across the ocean. We shall leave this port to-morrow."

The steward bowed himself out of the presence of Elos-Reve, and the latter was left alone with his books.

The next day at noon the Reve steamed out of the Mersey on her way across the Atlantic.

She was not now crowded with passengers. She was a private yacht now, the largest, finest, and richest in the world, costing a fortune annually to the man who ran her.

The voyage across the ocean was a quiet one. The owner amused himself reading in his library or pacing the deck.

The men on the ship wore handsome uniforms and were well paid and well fed. They worshiped the quiet, dark-faced young man who was the possessor of so much wealth.

The press of New York had printed many letters from England about the mysterious Elos-Reve, who claimed to be an American. The people wondered who he was, as nobody in America knew of a young American having such vast wealth as to enable him to pay $1,500,000 for a steamer for a private yacht.

When the great yacht arrived in port her arrival was heralded in all the papers.

When the great yacht arrived in port her arrival was heralded in all the papers.

The name Reve floated at the peak of the mast, and many private yacht owners came down the bay in their vessels to get a look at her.

Those who knew Captain McLeod asked permission to come on board and see the great vessel. The captain assented, and many of them thus got acquainted with the unknown American.

"How long will you stay in port, Mr. Elos-Reve?" one of the rich yacht owners asked.

"Until I grow weary and want a change," was the reply.

"Very indefinite. I hope we may be able to keep you from ennui for some time at least. My friends will join me in that, I am sure."

"Thanks. I shall be pleased to meet your friends. Bring down a load of them to dine with me to-morrow, at five p. m., on board the Reve.

"With pleasure. What limit as to number?"

"No limit at all—as many as you please. Bring some ladies too, and have a dance."

"Ah! That will be a treat," said the yachtsman, whose name was Grosvenor.

"We'll come down about four o'clock."

"Any hour you please."

On board his own yacht Grosvenor declared Elos-Reve a regular young Crœsus. He seemed to be under the impression that he was not an American.

"He is as dark as a Hindoo," he said, "but his accent is pure English. If he is foreign he has the best pronunciation for a foreigner I ever met."

That evening he made up a party at his club to dine on board the Reve at five p. m. the next day. Each gentleman was to bring one or more ladies with him. Everyone had heard so much about the mysterious stranger that he was anxious to meet him.

Elos-Reve was pacing the deck of his vessel when Grosvenor's yacht came down the bay. The water was smooth, and when the yacht came alongside a broad stairway of a ladder was dropped, so as to enable the visitors to run up on deck as safely and easily as in a private house.

Grosvenor then officiated as master of ceremonies, introducing his friends to Elos-Reve.

All the young women in the party fell in love with him at once. They thought he looked so romantic—like a prince of the East—his dark complexion and Grecian style of features aiding the sentiment not a little.

They went down in the great reception hall, where music of the most exquisite character greeted them. The ladies were shown to private rooms, whence they emerged after a while, to engage in the seductive waltz.

It was like a scene in fairyland. They had never seen anything like it afloat before.

At five o'clock dinner was announced, and the guests filed into the banquet hall, where there was a feast like those they had read of in the Arabian Nights. The dishes were all of gold and silver, and the viands of the richest and costliest kinds.

An elderly gentleman named Eversole sat on the left of the swarthy host. The latter paid him marked attention

"This is a peculiar kind of wine," remarked Eversole. "I never tasted anything like it before, and I have had a wide experience with wine."

"There is none like it in this country," returned the host. "There is only one spot in the wide world where the grapes from which it is made will grow to perfection."

"And where is that, pray?"

"In a little valley in Persia, and I buy the crop even before the grapes are plucked."

They looked at him in wondering amazement.

"Then the rest of the world can't get any of it?" asked Eversole.

"Only at my table," replied Elos-Reve. "You would not buy it if it were for sale, for it is the most expensive wine in the world. The Shah of Persia himself does not drink it. He won't pay the price that is asked for it."

"Have you ever eben in America before this visit?"

"I have been all over the world."

"Have you eer been in America before this isit?"

"Yes. I am a native of America. I am an American."

"Your name is not American. Your complexion is like that of a Hindoo's."

"Yes. You would have the same complexion were you to travel as I have."

The feast ended, dancing was resumed. The elderly guests went up on deck to smoke, while the younger ones remained in the big saloon to dance.

Mr. Eversole kept near the host, as if quite anxious to cultivate his acquaintance. Elos-Reve was extremely affable to him.

By and by he strolled off to examine some of the fine points of the great yacht. He was thus engaged when the steward of the Reve came up to him, and said:

"Pardon me, sir, but I have been sent by a party of gentlemen in a private room to ask you to join them."

"Eh! Yes, of course," and he threw away his half-finished cigar and followed the steward to a private room, the door of which closed behind him.

"This way, please," said the steward, opening another which revealed a flight of stairs leading down to another floor.

At the foot of the flight the steward opened the door.

It was dark as Egypt beyond.

Eversole shrank back.

But the steward seized him by the neck, hurled him head foremost into the room, and closed the door again.

CHAPTER VII.

AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR.

On board the Reve the festivities were kept up till a late hour.

The many guests danced, promenaded the great deck, and drank delicious wines under the stars. It was long past the hour of midnight when Grosvenor's yacht steamed back to the city, leaving the mysterious young millionaire on board his own magnificent vessel to retire at his leisure.

It was near noon when he arose from his couch. He found the morning papers on his table containing full accounts of the entertainment of the night before. They were full of the mystery of his personality, everyone asking the questions:

"Who is he? Whence comes all his enormous wealth?"

He ate his breakfast and read the papers. Then he went up on deck and smoked a fragrant cigar.

"A gentleman has come out in a rowboat to see you, sir," said his valet, following him up.

"Who is he?"

"I don't know, sir. He is in the captain's office."

"I'll see him," and he followed the valet to Captain McLeod's office, where he met a middle-aged man in a business suit.

They both bowed.

"Are you Mr. Elos-Reve," the gentleman asked.

"That's my name, sir."

"My name is Haviland. Here is my card. I am business manager for Mr. Conrad Eversole, who was one of your guests last night, and having urgent business with him, I called to see him here, thinking he may have remained on board. The captain here informs me that none of the guests remained last night."

"Yes, the captain is right," said Elos-Reve, looking at the card Haviland had given him. "They all went back to the city on board of Grosvenor's yacht. I remember meeting the gentleman and having a short conversation with him."

"Mr. Grosvenor does not recollect seeing him on the return trip," remarked Haviland.

"Possibly not. There were over one hundred in the party, I believe. I hope no harm has come to the gentleman."

"Thanks, sir. I can hardly believe that any harm has come to him. He may have gone to a hotel," and Haviland prepared to leave the Reve. The captain invited him to partake of a glass of wine before leaving which he did.

"I'll send you back in the steam launch," said the captain.

"I have a boat," remarked Haviland. "Thanks for your kindness."

"The launch will take the boat, too," and so he was sent back after promising to send word to the Reve if Mr. Eversole was still missing when he reached his place of business.

Eversole was missing.

He did not turn up, and the mystery deepened every hour. Everybody feared he had been drowned in some unaccountable way. Then the drowning of Justice Wales was recalled by the papers, and it was hinted that a strange fatality attended either the Reve or her mysterious owner.

Reporters came on board to make inquiries and get items of interest. They were treated courteously, and went away amazed at the riches of the great yacht.

At last Elos-Reve left the vessel and took a suite of rooms, with three servants, at one of the best hotels uptown. A few days later it was announced that he had purchased a million dollars' worth of property in the neighborhood of Central Park.

All society was in a flutter over the news, and when he was reported as having given orders to a firm of well-known architects for plans for the most palatial private residence in America, society was in something more than a flutter.

Almost as dark as a Hindu, yet claiming to be an American, Elos-Reve became more and more a mystery.

One day a ragged youth of some eighteen or twenty years of age called at the place where Mr. Haviland attended to the business of the Eversole estate. He asked to see Mr. Haviland.

"Mr. Haviland is busy," said a clerk. "What is your business with him?"

"I have a letter to him from Elos-Reve," and he handed the letter to the clerk, who gazed at it with astonishment. He had heard of the mysterious stranger, and wondered what the letter could be about. He took it into the inner office of the manager and handed it to him.

"The man who brought it says it's from Elos-Reve," said the clerk.

"Eh- what?" and Haviland glanced at the letter quickly. "Where is the man?"

"Outside, sir. He looks like a young tramp."

"Ah!" and he tore open the letter.

At the top of it was a very strange crest, if indeed it was

a crest. It was simply a dark cloud emitting sharp flashes of lightning. That was all.

But the letter!

"Dear Mr. Haviland," it began in a very bold hand, "I met this man, the bearer, in the streets last night. He asked me for charity, and in response to a question from me, told such a strange story, claiming to be a relative of your Mr. Eversole, who has lately so mysteriously disappeared, that I take the liberty of sending him to you. Be his story true or false, you will know what to do with him. If he is a deserving young man I will give him employment on board the Reve. If he is not, send him away and forget this trouble I have given you. Believe me, Sincerely yours,

"Elos-Reve."

"Why, who in the world can this fellow be?" exclaimed Haviland, as he glanced over the letter again. "I'll hear his story, anyway, and see what it is," and he tapped a bell on his table.

The clerk promptly appeared.

"Send in here the man who gave you this letter," he said to him.

The clerk bowed and retired.

In another minute the young tramp walked into the inner office where Henry Haviland was seated.

Haviland looked up at him.

The ragged tramp returned his gaze unflinchingly.

"What story is this you have been telling my friends?" Haviland asked.

"Don't you know me, Mr. Haviland?"

Haviland looked up quickly and turned pale as death. He staggered to his feet and glared as if a ghost had confronted him.

The young tramp returned his gaze with interest.

"When—did—you get here?" the manager gasped.

"Two days ago," was the reply. "I was afraid to come to my uncle in this fix, but last night the gentleman who gave me that note to you said that he was missing, and that nobody knew where he was."

"Yes. He has disappeared," and Haviland sank down in his seat again. "But you—what have you been saying to this man? Have you told him anything about where you have been?"

"No; but when I told him my name, he said he knew a man of that name in this city, and when I heard it I told him that he was a kinsman of mine. He did not seem to believe it, and gave me that letter to you, saying that if you said I was deserving of help, he would give me employment."

"Yes, that's all right. I'll take you down to see him on board his yacht to-night, and arrange for you to stay there with him. Here, take this and go out to some clothing store and get a suit of decent clothes. Meet me here at 8.30 o'clock this evening. I will be here, tho' the others will be away," and he handed him several bills as he spoke.

"Thank you, sir," said the young tramp as he took the money. "I'll feel like a new man when I get some new clothes on," and he turned and left the office.

"Ten thousand furies!" hissed Haviland, springing to his feet and pacing the floor. "How did it happen? He must be gotten out of the way, and at once!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A BAR OF LEAD.

As soon as the young man was gone Henry Haviland, when he had given vent to his pent-up feelings at seeing him turn up alive, sat down and wrote a short note to Elos-Reve.

"My dear sir," he said,—"Yours was delivered a few moments ago at the hands of the young man to whom you gave it, and in answer I beg leave to say that he is a fraud and in every way unworthy. I have heard of his story from other sources, and shall at once take steps to put a stop to any further repetitions of it. Thanking you for your kindness, I am, Very truly yours,

"Henry Haviland."

After sealing the note and addressing it he sent it to the hotel where Elos-Reve was stopping by the hand of a messenger.

The young millionaire was not in, so it was left in charge of the clerk for him.

Haviland seemed to be very much disturbed over the appearance of the young man. He paced the floor of his office like a caged tiger for over an hour.

Then, with a grim determination he nodded his head and muttered:

"Yes, I'll do it. It must be done, and I must do it myself. To have another to do it would simply be placing myself in his power. I can do it as well as another," and he put on his hat and went out.

On the street he turned and went toward the river, and did not stop until he had reached it.

Then he went among the 'longshoremen and inquired as to where he could hire or buy a rowboat. He asked nearly a score of men ere he found one who could give him any information on the subject.

He was directed to an old man who had boats to hire and for sale.

"I want a good one in which to take exercise at rowing of evenings," he said to the old man.

"Here is a good one, sir," said the boatman. "It's been in use but a year, an' is as good as new, sir."

"How much do you want for it with a pair of good oars?"

"Thirty dollars, sir."

He paid the money, and said:

"I'll come down and get it at about 8.30 this evening, and will row down to my place below here."

"I'll be here, sir," said the boat-seller as he stowed the money away in a greasy old wallet.

Haviland left and made his way back toward Broadway, wiping great beads of perspiration from his brow as he walked along the street.

"I wish I knew what had become of Eversole," he muttered to himself. "If I knew that he was dead I would know what to do. I could secure a big slice of the estate for myself. But if he should turn up alive after I had done so I would be ruined. I can't understand how this boy came to turn up here. He has been loose for some time, or he would not have been in rags like a tramp. I wonder if he has told Elos-Reve anything about where he has been, and how he got there? At any rate, my letter will cause him to take no stock in the story. Somebody has proved false, and I am going to find out who it is. But he must be taken care of. It won't do to have him going round New York telling stories about his adventures. He has a good many acquaintances among the boys here. But I guess he was ashamed to make himself known to them while he was looking so much like a tramp."

He reached his office again, and sat down before his desk. But his mind was no longer on the business of the office. He sat silent and gloomy, as if brooding over something, or trying to solve a perplexing problem.

The day wore away, and the hour for closing the office came. Henry Haviland left the office and went to his home uptown.

But after dinner he returned and entered the office by means of a key he carried.

In a little while he heard a rap on the door of the outer office. He opened it, and there stood the young tramp, no longer in rags, but dressed in a neat suit of new clothes.

"Ah! Come in," he said, and the young man entered.

Haviland closed the door and said:

"Sit down and tell me all about how you came to turn up here at this time, and in the condition of a tramp?"

"Well, before I do that," returned the young man, "suppose you give me some information first. I came back here to have that mystery cleared up."

"There was no mystery about it. I can explain it all in a few words, and will do so on our way down to Elos Reve's yacht in the bay. By the way, it's time for us to go now. He promised to give you employment on board his yacht. He pays well, and expects but little work from his men. It is a pleasure yacht, and he comes and goes as the notion takes him."

He put on his hat and opened the door. The young man passed out with him, and down on the street they wended their way down toward the river.

Down at the old boat-seller's place they found the boat waiting for them.

"Do you know how to row?" Haviland asked the young man.

"Yes."

"Well, we can take turns at the oars then. I'll take the first turn," and they sat down in the boat and Haviland took the oars and pushed off.

Down the stream they went. The tide was going out and they went with it, keeping well out of the way of the passing ferry-boats.

"D you think you can find the Reve in the dark?" the young man ked.

"C yes. It lies between the Jersey shore and the light-hou I can't miss it."

"s Mr. Elos-Reve know we are coming?"

"C. I wrote him a note, telling him that we would row out to his yacht to-night."

"He will be expecting us then?"

"Yes, of course."

They passed the Battery and pushed off down the bay toward the light-house, some four miles away.

"You had better take the oars now and let me rest a little," suggested Haviland, when they were about a mile or so out.

"Yes, certainly," and they both stood to exchange places.

In the narrow boat they had to catch hold of each other in order to pass.

As they did so Haviland deftly slipped a ten-pound bar of lead into the youth's coat pocket, and then gave him a sudden push that sent him overboard into the waters of the bay.

He sank bottomwards like a stone, and Haviland seized the oars and turned the boat toward the Long Island shore, pulling with all his might.

CHAPTER IX.

HAVILAND'S TERRORS.

Seated in a luxurious arm-chair in his superb apartments in the hotel was the young millionaire one bright summer afternoon when the card of Henry Haviland was brought to him.

His eyes flashed as he saw the name, but he coolly blew a wreath of smoke from his cigar, as he said to the servant:

"Show him up."

Mr. Haviland came in, hat in hand, and was cordially received by the dark-featured host.

"Take a seat and have a cigar; or would you have a glass of wine first?"

"I'll take the wine first, thanks," was the reply. "I hope you are enjoying good health to-day?"

"I don't think I ever enjoyed better health than I do at present," said the young host, as the valet brought a bottle of wine and a couple of glasses.

"I am glad to hear it," returned Haviland, filling a glass. "Here's to a long life with good health for you!"

"Thanks, the same to you," and they both drained their glasses.

Then they lit cigars and smoked and talked for some time.

"By the way, my dear sir," said Haviland, knocking the ashes from his cigar. "I have dropped in to ask you if you would be so kind as to give me an outline of the story that young man told you the night he begged alms of you in the streets. I have heard different versions from three others whom he had met, and would like to find out, if possible, the extent of his versatility as an inventor of romantic stories."

"Those tramps sometimes concoct very ingenious stories," remarked Elos-Reve, smiling. "I would not have paid any attention to him but for the fact that I had the honor of being slightly acquainted with Mr. Eversole. Of course, after I received your letter I would have nothing more to do with him, so when he called on me the next day——"

"Called on you the next day!" gasped Haviland, turning deathly pale, his eyes glaring as if death itself confronted him.

"Yes, he called here the next day in a new suit of— But what's the matter, man! Are you ill? Here! Take another glass of wine!" and he filled a glass hurriedly and extended it toward him.

He looked like a man who had but five minutes of time between him and the gibbet. He gulped down the wine, and said, after a minute or so:

"Pardon me, but I am subject to—such attacks when suddenly shocked."

"But what shocked you?"

"That young man gave me his word that if I would not prosecute him he would leave town at once. I gave him money to pay his way West, and here you say he called on you the next day."

"Oh, you can't trust those people in anything. I not only saw him the next day, but again yesterday. He had the cheek to call on me again. I showed him your letter and he said some hard things about you. I ordered him out of my presence and directed my servants not to permit him to come here again. After getting your letter I could not believe anything he said."

Haviland gradually recovered himself, but he was nervous and pale. He looked over at his host, and said:

"You did right. I shall put a detective on his tracks at once and have him arrested. The laws of this State protects the good names of people, and when a miserable fraud goes around claiming relationship with one of the best families in New York, when no relationship exists, he is liable to arrest and punishment."

"Well, I hope you may succeed in putting him where he belongs. If you say so I shall order my servants to detain him and send for you if he calls again."

"Oh, I wouldn't have you put to that trouble for anything, my dear sir. It will only bring your name into connection with that of a very disreputable individual in some unpleasant way."

"Possibly, and yet I flatter myself that no harm could come to me. I am willing to do anything to favor a friend."

"I want to get him away with as little publicity as possible.

If a detective catches him, and he finds himself in the hands of the law, he will be glad enough to leave and never return."

"Well, you may be right. You ought to know best," and Elos-Reve pushed the cigars over toward his visitor, who took a fresh one and then rose to leave.

Elos-Reve accompanied him to the door of his apartment, and there shook hands with him, saying:

"I should be pleased to hear the result of your efforts to run him down."

"Thanks. I shall let you know just as soon as possible," and so Haviland passed down and out of the hotel.

"May the furies seize him!" hissed he, as he trudged along the street. "He has as many lives as a cat. Two of them have been killed, and I guess there are seven more of them yet—if it is true that a cat has nine lives. He won't let me get another chance at him. He is too shrewd for that. I'll have to call in another to do the work. How strange he did not let me know that he was alive! I wonder if he is trying to play any game on me? Bah! What can a man without money do in New York? But I'll never sleep more till I have him joined to the great majority where silence reigns. By my soul, but I must have lost my head utterly, for I came away from Elos-Reve without getting from him the story that had been told him. And that's what I went there for, too. I didn't even ask him if the boy had said anything about his adventure the night before. How did he save himself? He must be a splendid swimmer; and he must have found what it was that was pulling him down to the bottom and removed it in time. Well, it was a failure, and I must try again. But what shall I say to him if I should meet him again? What explanation can I make? I'll make none. I'll say it was an accident, and that I know nothing about the bar of lead. But I guess he won't come about me again. He will keep out of my way, and nobody will believe his story."

He felt a tap on the arm, and, on looking around, saw a man who seemed to be an entire stranger to him.

"Is your name Haviland?" the man asked.

"Yes, that's my name."

"Do you know me?"

Haviland gave him a keen, scrutinizing glance, and then shook his head.

"No," he replied. "Who are you?"

The man leaned forward and whispered something in his ear.

Haviland started as if stung, staggered backward, and would have fallen to the pavement had not the man grasped him by the arm and held him up. His face was like a dead man's in its ashen pallor.

CHAPTER X.

THE OFFICER FROM LIVERPOOL.

When the stranger caught Haviland by the arm a grim smile lit up his face for a brief moment or two.

"You did not expect to see me," he remarked in a low tone of voice.

"No!" said Haviland, huskily.

"I heard the lad had mysteriously disappeared from the prison, so I thought it best to come over here and see you about it. Have you heard from him since his escape?"

"Yes, I have heard from him," said Haviland, recovering his breath again. "He is here in New York."

"He is?"

"Yes. I have seen him."

"Well, he can't make the law here take cognizance of things done in Europe."

"No. He doesn't seem to have any desire to do anything in regard to the matter."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. He has no money. He turned up here a ragged tramp. I bought him a suit of clothes. His uncle has mysteriously disappeared."

"Ah!"

"Yes, and that's why the lad is powerless. He can't do anything unless his uncle were alive."

"How do you account for the disappearance of his uncle?"

"I don't account for it. I can't account for it. He paid a visit to Elos-Reve on board his great yacht, one evening, in company with a large party of friends. When the yacht returned with the visitors, he was not among them. He has not been seen or heard of since."

The man seemed astonished.

He clutched Haviland's arm, and leaning forward whispered:

"It is a strange coincidence. Justice Wales was drowned from the deck of the Reve in the harbor of Liverpool"

"Yes, so I heard, but I never thought of it before," and Haviland looked him in the face as if trying to read his thoughts. "It does seem strange, now I think of it. How long have you been in New York?"

"Only a few days. I was uneasy when I heard that the lad had gotten away, and thought it best to leave the country. Ain't you afraid he will tell the story?"

"Yes, but so far he has not done so that I can find out."

"That is strange. How did you find out that he was here?"

"He met Elos-Reve on the street one night, and——"

"My God! Elos-Reve again!" gasped the stranger, interrupting him.

"Yes. He was in rags. He asked for charity. Elos-Reve stopped and spoke to him, and thus learned his name. As he claimed to be a nephew of Conrad Eversole, Elos-Reve sent him to me to see whether or not his story was true. That's how it came about."

"My dear sir," said the man, "there is some profound mystery about all this. Justice Wales was drowned from the deck of the Reve. Conrad Eversole mysteriously disappears on a visit to it, and now this lad turns up bringing you a note from the owner of it. What do you think of all this?"

"I don't know what to think. I never thought of it before. I can hardly think it can have any significance. What do you think?"

"Well, I don't know myself, as I never knew these things till now. Where is your office?"

"Downtown. I am going there now. Will you come with me?"

"Yes," and they locked arms and walked down the street together till they reached the office of the Eversole estate, of which Henry Haviland was manager.

They were closeted together for a couple of hours, after which time they came out together to the outer office. There they parted.

The stranger made his way down to the street, and Haviland went back into his private office.

There he paced to and fro like a caged tiger.

"That's another thorn in my side," he bitterly muttered, as he paced the floor. "I never dreamed that he would turn up, of all men. But here he is, and I am left to face him all alone. But then he can't say anything without implicating himself. If he makes any revelations he would be called for by the British Government. I don't think I have anything to fear from him. It's the boy I'm afraid of. I can't under-

stand why he has not made a charge against me. Yet I don't think he suspects me so much as a shrewder person would. But what srange fatality is it that connects this rich young Elos-Reve with this affair! I never thought of it till that officer called my attention to it. I can't believe that it is anything more than a mere accidental chain of circumstances. Yet it seems strange the boy should have gone to him again after the adventure on the river the other night. I wonder how much more this is going to be mixed up? Who next, I wonder."

The door opened and a man of business came in. In a moment he was deeply engrossed with the matter upon which the visitor came to consult him, and the interview lasted for some time.

In the meantime the man who had just left him walked up Broadway, looking about him like one who had been but a few days in the city. He had walked several blocks when he was accosted with:

"Ah, officer! Is it you? What are you doing in New York?"

He glared at the speaker, turned white as a sheet, and stammered:

"I—I—don't know—you, sir. You have the advantage of me."

"Very likely," responded the other. "I was very young when we met in Liverpool some two years ago, and I guess I have grown some since then. You don't know me?"

He shook his head.

"You are Officer Birken. of Liverpool, are you not?"

"Yes. I was an officer over there," he replied.

"I saw you there. You arrested me once and hauled me before Justice Wales at midnight. Then you took me, a sixteen-year-old boy, to a prison, before the sun rose again. Do you recollect me now?"

"Yes. I know you now."

"I thought so. What was the charge against me? I never knew."

"I am sure I don't remember. I arrested people every day while I was an officer, and cannot recollect one-half the cases. Of course, I had to do my duty. You don't blame me, do you?"

"I blame no man for doing his duty. But even if I did, I couldn't do anything. It happened outside of the United States of America."

"Yes—yes, of course. But how did you get back to New York?"

"It's a long story. I can't tell it to you now. I came back to find that an uncle of mine had mysteriously disappeared. Have you seen Haviland?"

"Haviland? Who is Haviland?"

"The man who made some kind of a charge against me when I was arrested. He said I was 'the one,' and the justice then ordered me locked up."

"Yes. I recollect the man now. I haven't seen him. Does he live in New York?"

"Yes."

"Why don't you get him to exxplain the matter to you?"

"He won't do it."

"That's strange. Why don't you make him do it?"

"Because there is no law under which it can be done. It was in England."

"Why not threaten to expose him if he does not?"

"I would be arrested and locked up as a blackmailer. He is very rich. I am poor. It makes the same difference here as in England."

"Yes, I suppose so. What are you doing?"

"Nothing at present. I was looking for something to do. I have hoped that Mr. Elos-Reve, the richest young man in the world, will give me employment on his yacht. You have heard of him?"

"Yes. He is a mystery to the whole financial world, I believe."

"I don't care anything about his mystery if he will give me employment. What are you doing here?"

"I have come over to stay. I am an emigrant, I suppose."

"What are you going to do?"

"I don't know yet. I would like to get employment, too."

"You are not particular what you do as long as it's good pay, I suppose?"

"No. I want to keep out of trouble, though."

"Of course. There's no danger of one's being picked up and railroaded as I was, though. Come on up the street with me. I think I can get you a place with me, if I get one myself."

They walked up the street together, and did not see that a man across the way was shadowing them. They exchanged addresses, and when they parted the ex-officer went back to the office of Henry Haviland, followed by the shadow.

CHAPTER XI.

THE UNKNOWN MASK.

In the evening the young man Eversole called on Birken at his hotel—a small, unpretentious hostelry downtown. He found him in the reading-room smoking his pipe.

"I have news for you," he said in a low tone of voice as he sat down by his side.

"What is it?" Birken asked.

"I went up to see Mr. Elos-Reve after I left you. I couldn't see him, however, but his man told me that his master had intrusted him to secure the services of two discreet men to aid in looking after his guests at his masked ball and banquet, which comes off in three days. I told him that I and a friend would be glad to serve, and he engaged me then and there, saying that the master would furnish the dress-suits for us, and give us a month's wages for our pay."

"By the queen's scepter, but that's liberal pay!" exclaimed the ex-officer.

"Yes, so it is. But that's he way he pays. They say nearly all the men on his yacht are rich from the tips he gives them now and then."

"Say, come up to my room, and let's talk this thing over," and he led the way up to his room, where they sat and talked for nearly two hours.

When he came away the Englishman walked some distance up the street with him.

"The boy is all right," he muttered, to himself as he wended his way back to his hotel. "If he had money, or knew how to manage things, he could make Haviland shell out a big pile of money. But he doesn't seem to care anything about it, and Haviland is worrying himself into a fever over his presence here. Bah! He is nothing but a boy yet, and I am going to try to get at the bottom of this thing. There is a mystery about it which I can't unravel even in my dreams. I'll make a suit of clothes and a month's wages out of this thing, anyhow."

The next day the youth called again with money to pay for a fine suit for each of them, and they repaired at once to a first-class tailor to have them made.

When the evening of the great masked banquet came they were on hand.

A man met them and ordered them to wear green masks.

"All the employees have them to-night," he said.

So they put them on.

"Here," said the youth, drawing a pencil and making a small cross on the bosom of the ex-officer's dress shirt. "I will know you by this sign. You will know me by the same token."

Then they parted and repaired to the rooms where they were to wait for orders.

Those who attended that entertainment have never forgotten it. Nothing read of in the famed Arabian Nights ever equaled it for beauty, richness, or the more than Oriental profusion of costly viands and decorations.

The musicians were concealed, but the soft strains filled every part of the grand hall, and the dancers, arrayed like princes and princesses, floated through the mazes of the waltz with dreamy languor.

The ex-officer in his green mask had many duties to perform. If a guest ordered a green mask to bring him a bottle of wine or a fan or anything, it was instantly done.

A superintendent who knew every detail was on hand to give the green masks instructions. By and by a slender youth came by gorgeously dressed, and Birken saw the superintendent make a profound bow to him.

"It must be the prince of all this wealth," he muttered, and he bowed low to him.

"Who are you?" the stranger asked, confronting him.

"I am one who was engaged by young Eversole for this evening," he replied.

"Ah, yes. And is he here too?"

"Yes, sir. We came together."

"Very well. See that you do everything right," and he passed on.

By and by some of the guests began to show signs of having taken too much wine.

One of them, a tall, dignified-looking man, moved about among the guests, neither dancing, eating, nor drinking.

Birken noticed him, and at once put him down in his mind as a distinguished citzen, who looked upon all the folly around him with contempt.

He was watching him when he made the discovery that the unknown was watching him. A cold chill ran down his spine. Why, he could not tell.

The unknown came toward him. He retired into the side room, with others, as if to avoid him.

He saw the youth in there also. He could not be mistaken. There was the penciled cross on the bosom of his shirt.

But the unknown came up to him and laid a hand on his shoulder, saying:

"John Birken, I know you!"

The ex-officer started as if stung.

"I don't know you, sir," he said.

"No, of course not. You could not. I no longer live among my fellows. But I know you. I could see you even through a stone wall, not to say a thin mask. Why did you do it, Birken, why did you do it?"

"I—I don't understand you, sir," stammered Birken. "I don't know what you mean, sir."

"You are sure of that? I have paid the penalty and you will have to do the same. It was bad business—it was bad business," and he shook his head as he spoke.

The shaking of his head caused the mask to drop from his face. It was caught in his hands and instantly put back.

But during that brief moment during which he caught sight of the face of the unknown, the ex-officer's soul was filled with a nameless horror.

"The justice!" he exclaimed between a gasp and a groan.

The unknown advanced with an outstretched hand, as if to take him by the shoulder.

But, with one long, wild, soul-harrowing shriek, the green mask broke away and made for the window behind him.

The window was closed, for the evening was cool, but he made a plunge head foremost and crashed through the glass as if he had been shot out of a catapult.

CHAPTER XII.

THE STRANGE SCENES OF A NIGHT.

As the shriek and crash of glass rang through the grand hall and along through the corridors, it filled the guests with a panicky fear.

Some of them thought the building was falling, and made a rush to save themselves.

Instantly a dozen women fainted in the arms of their gallants, and dire confusion reigned until a strong, manly voice sung out:

"Silence! Attention! A man in the waiting-rooms took too much wine and broke a glass. There is no danger. Please go on with the dance."

The guests laughed, and the scene of revelry went on.

A search for the terrified Englishman revealed the fact that he had fallen on a strong canvas awning under the window, from which he rolled to the ground unhurt.

But he took to his heels, bareheaded and maskless, and fled down the street at the top of his speed.

A policeman who was stationed around on the other side of the building, ran around to see about the cause of the crash of glass on the pavement, but failed to get a glimpse of the fleeing man.

Inside the man whose face had caused the ex-officer's panic coolly adjusted his mask and walked out of the room. He was soon lost in the throng of gay revelers.

At the hour of midnight they all met in the grand banquet hall, before a series of tables such as the imagination had never conceived of before.

At a signal they removed their masks.

Elos-Reve was at the head of the center table.

Miss Millman sat on his right and Miss Denton on his left—both rival belles of the metropolis.

Just a seat or two farther down sat Henry Haviland.

As he gazed at the young man, the magician whose wraith had conjured up all this wonderful magnificence, he turned deathly pale.

His face was livid in its ghastliness, and, after looking steadily at Elos-Reve for a minute or two, he arose and staggered away toward the cloak and hat room. Elos-Reve excused himself to the ladies for a moment or two and followed him.

"What's the matter, my dear Haviland?" he asked. "You look ill. What is the trouble?"

"I am ill," he said in reply. "But it will soon pass away."

"Are you subject to such attacks?"

"Yes, sometimes. Somebody has marked your shirt-front there."

"Yes. A young lady did it an hour ago, thinking I was her lover. She asked permission to do so."

Haviland looked at him in silence for a minute or so, and asked:

"Why did she wish to do so?"

"Because I denied being the person she said I was."

Haviland drank a glass of wine which had been brought to him, after which he sat down and soon regained his wonted color and spirits.

Elos-Reve induced him to return to the banquet hall, and was soon once more seated at the head of the table.

Somebody had taken the seat which Haviland had vacated, and so he was forced to hunt another further down.

He ate of the rare viands and drank of the wines from the Orient till his face was flushed under the generous stimulation.

When he had sat at the table as long as he wished, he arose and walked over to one of the ante-rooms to indulge in a smoke, as others were doing.

He lit a cigar and was smoking, when one of the party, who was present when the Englishman plunged through the window, began talking about it.

"The fellow in the green mask was approached by another mask—one of the guests—and called him by name—Birken, I believe, was the name. The green-masked seemed dumfounded when the other said he would have known him behind a stone wall, much less a mask. Then he asked him why he had done something or other, saying:

" 'It was bad business. It was bad business,' and he shook his head so vigorously that his mask fell off. He caught it in his hand, and was replacing it when the man in the green mask utered a groan, followed by a shriek, and crying out: 'The justice!' went through the window, glass and all, like a rocket. I never saw anything like it in all my life. But what's the matter with you, my dear sir? You look like death in the face. The room is too——"

"Never mind me!" said Haviland, hoarsely. "What became of the man whose face was exposed?"

"I don't know. He went out of the room a moment or two later, and I have not seen him since."

Haviland's face was ghostly as he smoked and listened. A glass of wine was brought to him, which he drank as if consumed by thirst.

"How do you feel now, my dear friend?" Elos-Reve asked, coming up and laying a hand on his arm.

"Better, thank you," he replied.

"Glad to hear it. Come and have some more wine. It will do you good. I fear you are not quite used to such late hours," and he drew his arm through his and led him out into the banquet hall again to where a number of friends were tasting a wine which had never been seen in New York before.

Haviland drank several glasses of it, and pronounced it the most delicious he had ever tasted. The others coincided with him.

"The peculiarity of the wine, gentlemen," said Elos-Reve, "is that it grows on you. Each succeeding glass seems more delicious to the palate than all the previous ones. And the intoxication is a delicious dream to a man of good imagination."

"The very taste of it is a dream," remarked one of the guests as he held a glass of it to his lips.

Haviland drank several glasses of it. He seemed to be growing young again as it diffused a genial warmth all through his frame. But he soon found that it had a force he had not dreamed of. He put his arm through the host's, and made his way to one of the cloakrooms.

But one man was there when they entered—a tall, dignified-looking man—who came forward, looking Haviland in the face.

Haviland glanced up at him, and started back with a gasp. Elos-Reve looked at him and saw a look of horror in his eyes. The next moment, with a deep groan, Haviland sank insensible to the floor.

CHAPTER XIII.

HAVILAND'S HALLUCINATIONS.

When Henry Haviland sank down to the floor, with a groan on his lips, the tall unknown, whose presence had caused such a shock, turned and disappeared through another door.

Elos-Reve instantly called for help, and a dozen men rushed into the room to render necessary assistance.

They were all very much excited.

"What's the matter?" they all demanded in a chorus.

"Haviland is very ill, I fear," he replied. "Help me lift him to yonder lounge, please."

A dozen willing hands reached out, and in another minute Haviland was lying on the lounge.

"He is dead," said one.

"His heart beats," said another.

"Send for a physician," suggested a third.

"Here's Dr. Spiller," cried someone, as a consequential-looking man pushed his way to the side of the unconscious man on the lounge.

"What's the matter with him, doctor?" asked someone, as the doctor felt of his pulse.

He made no answer, and for ten minutes he was silent.

Then he found that the patient was coming to.

Haviland suddenly opened his eyes and glared up at those about him.

"Bring a glass of wine," said the doctor, and one was quickly brought in and given to him.

"Here, drink this, and you'll feel better, sir," said the doctor, holding the glass of wine to his lips.

Haviland drank it, and then again scanned the faces of those about him.

When his eyes rested on the face of Elos-Reve he asked:

"Where is he—where did he go?"

"Whom are you speaking of?" Elos-Reve asked.

"The man—who—was here—when we came in."

"There was no one here when we came in."

Haviland glared at him.

"Didn't you see anyone?" he asked.

"No. You staggered back, gave a groan, and then a strange sort of a laugh, and fell to the floor. There was no one in here when we came in."

"Well, I thought there was," and he laid back on the lounge, closed his eyes, and seemed to be trying to think.

"The wine must have been too much for him," remarked one.

"Yes," said another. "I think another bottle of it would serve me the same way. I never drank such a delicious yet subtle wine as that was. Come, let's go and have another bottle of it."

In a little while the guests were all back in the great hall where the dancing was going on, and Elos-Reve was for a few moments left alone with Haviland.

"Did you say that no one was in this room when we came in here?" the latter asked.

"Yes, that's what I said. Why do you ask?"

"I thought I met a man face to face here whom I knew to be dead."

"What!" and Elos-Reve gazed at him in amazement. "It must have been the wine you drank. It's a new wine to America, you know."

"It may be so. But it seemed so real that I was knocked dumb. It was the worst shock I ever received in all my life."

"Who was he? Mr. Eversole?"

"No. I have never been able to make up my mind that he is dead. It was a man whom I had met but once, and then under peculiar circumstances."

"It's the strangest thing I ever heard of, Mr. Haviland. One of my servants in one of the cloaks saw something that threw him into a panic, and in his terror he dived through a window to the street below. I wonder if this hotel is haunted?"

"I don't know. I have never heard that it was."

"Well, I would like to understand all this mystery. I hope,

when you are fully recovered from this shock, you will try to help me unravel it."

"I'll do all I can in that direction. Will you be kind enough to permit me to go to my home? I cannot enjoy anything now but perfect rest."

"Certainly, my dear sir. Let me send a man in the carriage with you to see that you are not without assistance if you should need any."

"No, thanks. That is unnecessary," and he arose and made his way to the cloak and hat room, where he was accompanied by the host.

A few minutes later he was in his carriage and on his way to his home.

To say that his brain was in a whirl would be putting it very mildly. He was still so much confused that he was half dazed.

"I saw him as plainly as I ever saw a man in the flesh," he said to himself. "And he gave me such an accusing look that I was utterly panic-stricken."

"That was what sent Birken through the window in a panic. My God! what does it all mean? Birken whispered to me that I would know the boy by a cross made with a pencil upon his shirt front. I saw it there on one of the green masks. Then when they all unmasked I saw the same mark on the shirt front of Elos-Reve. I can't understand how these things get mixed up so. He said a young lady made the mark on his bosom, thinking she recognized him as her lover. Maybe so—maybe so. But how did she come to make the same kind of mark that Birken and the boy had? I can't understand it. He said there was no one in the room at the time I saw the justice. Then it was a ghost. They say ghosts are only seen by those whom the ghosts themselves call on. My God! If I am to be subjected to such visits in the future I shall soon be sent to the mad-house. I want to see Birken and find out what was the matter with him."

He reached his home, and retired at once—but not to sleep. He could not sleep. His soul was squirming under the lash of suspense and fear. Conscience had no hold on him whatever. He had but one motive power behind him, and that was avarice.

The festivities kept up all night, and the guests were loth to leave even when the stars began to fade away. Such was the influence of a scene that, for splendor and royal munificence, had never been heard of in America before.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE STORY OF THE RAGGED YOUTH.

Let us go back and take up the thread of our story at the point where Justice Wales, of Liverpool, was supposed to have fallen overboard from the deck of the Reve and drowned in the waters of the Mersey. It will doubtless be remembered by the reader that, instead of having fallen overboard the justice was thrust into a dark room and locked up—a prisoner—that a heavy weight was cast overboard and the cry of "Man overboard!" rang through the great yacht.

But as the body was not recovered everybody believed that the justice had been drowned, and the fact was so published and accepted.

Soon after that supposed sad event Elos-Reve sailed for New York in the Reve, where he was received by the rich people of the city with open arms. Stories of his marvelous wealth filled the papers, and his liberal expenditures won the hearts of all who came in contact with him.

During the voyage over, Justice Wales never saw the light of day. The faint rays that came to him through a small barred window allowed but a dim twilight.

"Why am I a prisoner?" he asked each time his meals were brought before him by an attendant.

But the query was not answered.

"I am being taken away from England," he said to the attendant one day. "But the mailed hand of the British Empire will reach out and crush the perpetrators of this outrage."

Still the attendant said nothing, and the days went on. The great yacht cast anchor in the bay of New York, and soon another prisoner was added, but in a separate room.

One day a ragged youth entered the justice's dungeon.

"Hist," he said, speaking low, "I have stolen the key. When night comes I can get you out and you can make your escape to the shore."

"Where are we now?" the justice asked.

"In the port of New York."

"How did you know there was a prisoner on board?"

"One of the crew got drunk and told me all about it. I am a poor fruit peddler. When you are free you will do something for me, won't you?"

"Yes, I'll give you 1,000 pounds if you can enable me to escape from this vessel."

"One thousand pounds! That's English money. I don't like English money or English people. They had me in prison there once for more than two years."

"Indeed! I am sorry to hear that. What had you done?"

"Nothing. I was not even tried. I was arrested at night, taken before a justice in Liverpool, who simply asked if I was the one, and on being told that I was, he wrote out an order for my commitment to prison. I was taken away on the cars, traveling all night, and put in a dungeon, where I stayed for over two years, when I made my escape. Do you wonder at my hating England and everything English?"

"No, not if that has been your experience. But you must be mistaken. The laws of England are not administered that way."

"I am not mistaken. I had two years taste of it and ought to know."

"But I have been a justice in Liverpool for twelve years, and know that English trials are not conducted that way."

"You say you were a justice in Liverpool for twelve years?"

"Yes."

"Were you a justice there between two and three years ago?"

"Yes."

"What is your name?"

"Wales."

"Ha! You are the judge who sent me to prison! Good Lord! I'd let you rot here before I'd help you to escape!"

"My young friend, you must be mistaken."

"I am not mistaken. I was arrested by an officer named Birken. He carried me before you, and he and another man said I was the one, and you committed me to prison. I was never told what I was arrested for, and don't know to this day. When you tell me that after two years in a dungeon, whose walls were broken by thunderbolts to enable me to escape—I don't know how it was done—you make a mistake yourself—that's all."

"This is very strange, to say the least," said the prisoner. "I can't understand it. No trials are ever held at night, unless it is the continuation of a long one which had to be ended that day. I have sat at night for the purpose of filling out commitments for prisoners who have been sentenced to imprisonment in other courts, and the form is very much like that which you describe. Can it be possible that you

were substiuted for a prisoner who had been convicted and sentenced after a trial in another court?"

"I don't know whether I was or not. But I do know that I was arrested and sent to prison without a trial, and that I stayed in prison for more than two years."

"Well, that is the only way such a thing could have happened, and only then after the officer or some of the prison officials were bribed. I might have been imposed on that way. Your own good sense ought to teach you that arrest and imprisonment without trial is contrary to the law in all civilized countries."

"Yes, so I have always thought, but my experience told me differently."

"Well, your investigation will tell you that I am right."

"But I can't investigate. Were I to go back to England they would arrest me and send me back as an escaped convict, and you know it as well as I do."

"Very true; but investigation would bring everything to light, and you would be released, I am sure."

"I am not willing to take the chances on that."

"Well, give me my liberty and I'll go back and ferret out the whole affair for you. I am sure you would also be given heavy damages for false imprisonment."

"I'll think about it. I didn't know you were the judge who sent me to prison. I'll think about it and let you know."

"My young friend, don't leave me to pine longer in this loathsome dungeon. Set me free and know that you have done one good deed in your life for all the wrongs that have been heaped upon you."

"I'll think about it. I can come on board with fruit every day, and I will slip in here and see you again," and ere the prisoner could do or say anything to stop him the ragged young visitor had passed out of the door and closed it behind him.

"My God!" groaned the justice. "What a strange meeting. I wonder in my soul if the story of that poor fellow is true. If it is I cannot blame him for hating the English government and people. If it is true the officers must have been bribed by someone who was interested in having the youth put out of the way. I wonder if my imprisonment on board this vessel has anything to do with that case? How did that youth get in here? Will he come again and help me to make my escape?"

Two hours passed, and the justice had again settled down into an almost hopeless despair, when he heard a key turn in the lock, the door open and a voice say:

"Come!"

He walked out and up a narrow flight of stairs, preceded by a man in uniform, who led him into a sumptuous apartment where he was confronted by Elos-Reve himself.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PRISONER AND HIS HOST.

On seeing the justice enter the room, Elos-Reve sprang up and made a profound bow to him, at the same time waving his hand to the guide to retire.

"Take a seat, sir," he said to the justice.

"What is the meaning of this outrage, sir?" the justice demanded. "A British subject cannot be treated thus with impunity."

"Take a seat, sir," said Elos-Reve. "I have sent for you to have a talk with you. I have about as much fear of the British government as a duck has of rain. Money is power, and I can command as much of that as the British government can. I can build a navy and hire as many sailors as would be needed to send all the English ships to the bottom of the sea, so don't go to threatening me with the wrath of England. It won't be worth that!" and he snapped his fingers as he made the remark.

The justice sat down and gazed at the dark face of the mysterious stranger in silence.

"I made you a prisoner and brought you away from the jurisdiction of your government," said Elos-Reve in a very quiet tone of voice, "in order to get at the bottom of an outrage committed on the person of an American youth in whom I am deeply interested. That youth talked with you two hours ago, and what you said to him is now known to me. If what you said to him is true, I have done you a great wrong, for which I am ready to make all the amends due you."

"Every word I said to him is true, sir," said the justice.

"On your honor, do you say that?"

"Yes, I swear it on my honor."

"Then I will believe you. You are entitled to heavy damages for what you have suffered. You may name the sum, and it shall be paid to you on one condition."

"What is that condition?"

"That you remain my guest in disguise for a time and aid me in getting at the guilty ones in this outrage."

"I will do that, sir, as my good name is at stake in the perpetration of the outrage. I give you my hand on that," and he sprang up and extended his hand to the dark-faced owner of the vessel.

"Very good. Now name the sum that will make the proper reparation to you for what you have suffered."

"I have suffered terribly."

"Yes, no doubt. But that young friend of mine suffered more. He was in a dungeon for two years. He may never get a cent of damages."

"Yes, that is true. I think 20,000 pounds would be about right."

"There are 20,000 people in England who would go through your experience for a tenth of that sum. But you are the Court. I will not appeal from the decision. You can have the money at any time you call for it."

"I shall have to call for some linen and other wear at once," said the justice.

"I shall send for a clothier to measure you for all you may need, and you can give such orders as you please. I shall ask you to attend a great masked ball and banquet up in the city on Thursday night, so you must order a suit for the occasion. Two parties will be there who, I think, may be in some way connected with this case. It is believed in England that you were drowned from the deck of this vessel."

"My God! Think of what my wife must have suffered!"

"Yes. But think of her joy when she hears you are alive again.

"It seems like a hideous dream to me, my dear sir."

"No doubt; but the awakening will be the more pleasant. I shall carry you back to England in royal state, and make an explanation to your people that will redound to your honor and credit."

"I shall do all in my power to help you unravel this mystery," returned the justice. "Do you know why the young man was arrested at all?"

"I do not. Neither does he. It is the mystery of the whole business."

"Well, give me such instructions as you may think I need, and I'll do all in my power to aid you. But I must ask for a change of quarters."

"Of course. You shall have the room next to mine. There is a bath-room attached. You can have all the comforts of a

home there," and he himself arose and showed him the way into the other apartment.

"This is charming!" said Wales. "I'll take possession at once, if you please."

"Yes. Here are books and papers to read. The tailor will call to-day for your orders."

The justice was thus transferred to more comfortable quarters, and it was while he was thus enjoying himself there that the steward came to Elos-Reve and whispered something to him.

"Indeed!"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I'll go and see him myself after awhile."

The steward went away, and Elos-Reve remained some time longer with the justice. But as the latter was anxious to enjoy the luxury of a bath, he finally bowed himself out and left him alone.

Once more in his own sumptuous apartment he sat down and gave way to a train of deep thought. He remained half reclining in a capacious arm-chair for upward of an hour, without so much as uttering a word.

Suddenly he sprang up and said:

"I'll go in and see him," and ringing for the steward, said, when that individual appeared:

"Get a key to Number 2 and open it for me. I'll go in and see him."

The steward produced the key and went with him into a room on the other side of the main saloon.

There he unlocked another door which opened on a flight of narrow stairs.

Down the flight was another door and that was also unlocked and opened.

Elos-Reve entered the room, which was so dark that at first he could not see three feet in front of him.

He looked around, but as he could see no one, he called out:

"Mr. Eversole!"

"I am here," came in a hoarse voice from out of the darkness beyond. "I am here, and so are you, fiend!" and the next moment Elos-Reve felt himself grasped by the throat and hurled to the floor as though he were but an infant in the hands of a giant.

He tried to get out a word—to cry for help—but the grasp on his throat was too much for him, and he began to think his time had come right there and then.

CHAPTER XVI.

MR. CONRAD EVERSOLE.

Elos-Reve was thrown helpless on his back by the sudden and entirely unexpected attack. In the darkness of the room he was utterly confused.

He struggled in vain to free himself from the fierce grip on his throat, or even to cry out for help.

Yet he did not give up.

He squirmed, twisted, kicked, and struggled in the grasp of the madman, for such he thought his assailant was.

"I'll kill you if I die myself!" hissed the prisoner, and the words startled the steward, causing him to turn and peer into the dark room.

It saved the life of Elos-Reve.

The steward sprang forward and caught the prisoner, tearing him away from the young millionaire with a savage force.

"Let me alone! Let me tear his head off of him!" hissed the prisoner, making a desperate effort to release himself from the grasp of the steward.

But the steward was a strong man. He held him until his master was able to come to his assistance.

In another minute the irons were on the prisoner's wrists.

"I'll kill you for this outrage!" the prisoner hissed. "I am in your power now, but if you don't murder me I'll yet have my revenge!"

"Do you know that you are yourself a victim of vengeance, Mr. Eversole?" Elos-Reve asked, in a tone so calm that even the prisoner himself was surprised.

"No. I've never done anything to make me the victim of anyone's vengeance," was the quick reply.

"Are you sure of that?"

"Yes, I am."

"Maybe you have forgotten some of the past."

"I have forgotten nothing. By what right am I held a prisoner on board this vessel?"

"You have forgotten nothing? Did you not have a nephew of the name of Malcolm Eversole?"

"Yes—what of him?"

"That is what I am trying to find out. What became of him?"

"What is that to you?"

"Why do you not answer my question instead of questioning me?"

"By what right do you ask?"

"By the right of might. You are a prisoner and in irons. Those irons will never come off until that question is answered."

"Who are you?" demanded the prisoner.

"Still asking questions! Why don't you answer some? Where is your nephew?"

"I don't know."

"Why don't you know?"

"Because he ran away to sea, and I've never heard of him since."

"How do you know he ran away to sea?"

"Because I was told so by the man with whom I sent him traveling in Europe."

"Who was that man?"

"Mr. Henry Haviland, my business manager in New York."

"How does he know the boy went to sea?"

"The boy left a note telling where he was going. When Haviland got the note the boy was two days out at sea."

"And you have never heard from him since?"

"No."

"Have you ever tried to hear from him?"

"I have been expecting to hear from him or of him. Voyages sometimes last two or three years."

"Yes, I have read of them lasting five years. But why did he run away to sea, Mr. Eversole?"

"How should I know? Who can tell the motive of a boy of sixteen with a wild desire to see the world?"

"But were you not really quite anxious to have him run away and never come back again?"

"No. Why should I be?"

"That is what I am trying to find out. Did you ever see the note Malcolm wrote saying he was going to sea?"

"No. Mr. Haviland told me about it, and I did not ask to see it."

"Didn't think enough of him to even read his note, eh?"

"No. I had a great business to attend to, with no time to waste on a boy like him. I knew he would turn up again some day, if he lived."

"But you really did not expect ever to see him again, did you, after Mr. Haviland came back to New York and told you what had become of him?"

"I—I—don't understand you," stammered the prisoner.

"Mr. Steward, conduct him up to the room at the top of the stairs. I will talk to him in there."

The steward led him up to the room indicated, and Elos-Reve followed him. The room was furnished luxuriously.

"Take a seat, sir. Steward, you may leave us alone here."

The prisoner sat down, with a round table in front of him. Elos-Reve sat opposite him.

"You say you don't know what I mean when I ask if you really expected ever to see your nephew again after Haviland had come back and made his report to you?"

"No—I don't know—what do you mean by that question. Where did you meet him?"

"I met him after Haviland left him. He didn't go to sea at all."

"He didn't?"

"No. And you knew it all the time!"

"Eh! I knew it?"

"Yes—that's what I said."

"Do you mean to say I knew he had not gone to sea?"

"Yes."

"But I didn't, sir!"

"I believe that Haviland told you the exact truth—and he did not tell you that your nephew had gone to sea."

The prisoner turned pale as a sheet, and glared at the dark-faced young man before him as if a great and undefined fear possessed his soul.

"Do you mean to tell me that I am lying to you, sir?" he asked, after a silence of a minute or so.

"I mean to say that you are not telling the truth," was the quiet reply.

"You have me in your power. I cannot resent your insults in the way I would were I free."

"You are in my power—that's true, and you haven't much chance of resenting any insults that may be given you. But your nephew never had any chance, either. I swore a great oath to him that if I ever got the chance I would make you explain the mystery of your conduct toward him, or do something else. You will never be free again until you have done that. This vessel is called a floating palace by all your friends. It is also a floating prison in which you will live out the balance of your life—unless I should happen to die before you do—or until you tell the truth about it. Now what will you do?"

Conrad Eversole was a picture to look at as he sat there in front of the young millionaire, whose dark face seemed to haunt his very soul. His eyes glared and his features worked convulsively as he squirmed in the chair.

"What will you do?" Elos-Reve asked.

"How do you know I have not already told you the truth?"

"Malcolm Eversole has told me his side of the story. You ought to know by that whether I am to be deceived by the story you have told."

"But how do you know that he told the truth?"

"I will answer that by saying that I believe every word of his story, and don't believe one word of yours."

"Then what's the use of my saying anything at all?"

"None whatever unless you tell the truth. I will know it when I hear it, you may depend on that."

"Then I have nothing more to say. I have told you the truth as far as I know it. Haviland came back and told me the boy had run away to sea. That is all I know about it."

"And is that all you choose to say about it?"

"Yes. It is all I can say."

The young millionaire tapped a bell on the table, and the stalwart steward came in.

"Take him back to his room, steward, and lock him up again."

The steward laid a heavy hand on his shoulder, saying:

"Come on, sir."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DENUNCIATION.

Arising and glaring at the dark-featured young man, the prisoner exclaimed: "I am in your power, but a day of reckoning will come!"

"I hope so," returned the host, coolly. "I am doing all in my power to bring it about. I have been trying to have a reckoning with you. Do you wish to face your nephew? He is coming over the Atlantic now!"

He staggered as if stricken a blow, catching hold of a chair with his manacled hands to support himself.

"Ha! You never expected to see him again, did you?"

"If he has instigated this outrage on me I never want to see him again. I shall curse him with my latest breath."

"You have made his life a curse to him already. Your curse has come home to roost on your own head. Take him away, steward, and see that he does not get away from us."

"Come, sir," said the steward, again laying a heavy hand on the prisoner's shoulder.

"Come, sir, shall I use force?"

He turned and walked slowly toward the door, which led down the flight of stairs to his former cell.

Suddenly he turned and gave vent to a fierce invective, denouncing the young millionaire as a fiend, and calling down upon his head the heavy hand of vengeance.

Elos-Reve sprang to his feet, his eyes ablaze and his frame trembling with wrath. He rushed forward, pointing an accusing finger within an inch of the prisoner's nose, and exclaimed:

"You inhuman brute! You hyena in human form! You dare to talk of vengeance! You, who consigned an innocent youth to a living tomb in a foreign land! That youth is coming to face you, and whatever vengeance he decrees shall be meted out to you! Away with him! Let his cowardly soul shiver and crouch in the darkness that so becometh his deeds!"

The steward seized him by the arm and dragged him toward the door again. He went meekly, making no resistance, and in another moment the door of his cell closed upon him with a thud that sent a cold chill through his frame.

Elos-Reve paced to and fro in his room trembling under the excitement that had for the moment seized upon him.

"I must not give way to indignation," he said. "I forgot myself. The time has not come yet. I must abide my time. It will come in good time, and then the blow will fall where it should. Money is king. It can build up or crush, and in this case it is going to do both."

He finally sat down and buried his face in his hands, giving way to a long train of bitter thoughts. He sat thus an hour or more, when he felt a hand laid gently on his shoulder.

Looking up he saw Justice Wales, who had just come from his bath.

"I feel so much refreshed," he said, "that I came in to ask permission to promenade the deck and breathe some of the fresh sea air."

"Yes. Your beard has grown so that no one will know you. Will you permit me to walk with you?"

"I should be glad to have you do so," was the reply.

"Then we will light cigars and go out. I am feeling more depressed to-day than ever before. I have a burden on my mind that weighs very heavy, and no one can divide the weight with me at present."

"I am sorry that I cannot do so myself," returned the justice, as he buttoned up his coat about him. "I would like to render you some assistance, for I am now convinced that you are honest and true in all you are now doing."

"I know that I am sincere in what I am now doing," was the reply. "I know also that I have violated the laws of your country and mine, but I did it in the interest of justice."

"Well, so far as the laws of England are concerned, you will never hear from them in connection with my case. I don't blame you for what you have done. I shall do all in my power to aid you in unraveling the mystery of that young man's imprisonment."

They walked the deck for upwards of an hour engaged in earnest conversation, during which time Elos-Reve gave his guest some instructions as to what he wanted him to do at the masked ball he was to give in the city.

The tailor came to the Reve in the steam launch and received the orders of the justice for a complete wardrobe.

In two days the greater part of the order was delivered, and gave perfect satisfaction. Elos-Reve gave his check for the bill.

The next day they went up to the city, where the justice went to a barber-shop and had his beard shaved just as it was when he lived in Liverpool, and then kept himself concealed in one of the superb apartments of the young millionaire at the hotel till the time came for him to mingle with the guests en masque.

His presence among the guests was not noticed, save by those who wondered if they knew the tall, dignified man in the blue mask.

What effect a glimpse of his face had on John Birken, the Englishman, and Henry Haviland, the American, we have already seen. They both became panic-stricken.

One fled with a yell of terror, and the other sank down with a groan at his feet.

John Birken fled down the street after landing on his feet from the awning, which saved his bones, if not his life.

He tore off the mask and threw it away, and did not cease running till he had gone a dozen blocks.

Then he stopped to get his breath.

"My God!" he panted. "I never had such a fright in my life! I saw him as plain as I ever saw anyone in my life. And he spoke to me, too—called my name, and asked me why I did it. Ugh! I would have jumped from the top of St. Paul's. I cut myself with the window glass. I wonder if they'll make me pay for it? They have my pay, and can keep it. I won't go back there any more. Haviland is there, and I'll bet he'll see him, too. I'll go to my hotel and go to bed, but I'll bet I can't sleep a wink to-night."

He was cut on the face and on one of his hands, and the blood attracted considerable attention as he walked along the street. But he managed to reach his hotel at last, and went direct to his room.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN THE CARRIAGE.

Next day after the great masquerade and banquet, the papers were filled with sensational accounts of the magnificence of the entertainment. It was said that the rare wines alone cost a fortune on which some business men would be content to retire, to say nothing of other features of the banquet. The panic created by one of the servants suddenly becoming crazed

by wine and plunging through the window, was told with more or less sensational exaggerations.

Mr. Elos-Reve, early in the afternoon, sent a messenger to the residence of Henry Haviland to inquire after his health.

He was not at home, Mrs. Haviland said, and the messenger came back and told his master so.

He entered his carriage and drove downtown to Haviland's office.

He was not in.

"Has he been here to-day?" Elos-Reve asked of the head clerk.

"Yes. He was here an hour ago."

"Do you know when he will return?"

"Yes, sir. His desk is open."

"I will leave my card for him," and he did so.

The head clerk was thunderstruck when he read the card.

But in another moment the young millionaire had gone out and entered his carriage.

Just as the carriage was about to drive off Haviland was seen coming down the street.

John Birken was with him.

"Wait," said Elos-Reve to the coachman.

Haviland and Birken were about to enter the building when Elos-Reve called out:

"Haviland! Haviland!"

Haviland turned and saw who it was, and hastened to the side of the carriage.

"I am glad to see you, sir," he said, extending his hand to the young millionaire.

"Thanks. I called to see how you were. But I see you are all right. Ah! Isn't that the man who went headforemost through the window last night?" and he stared at Birken as he spoke.

"Yes," replied Haviland. "We have been comparing notes of what we saw last night," and Haviland seemed to be very much embarrassed.

"Well, what have you found out? Is the hotel haunted or not?"

"I really don't know, sir. I—I don't know what to say."

"What does the other man say? Say, come here, my man," and he beckoned to Birken as he spoke.

Birken came to the side of the carriage, removing his hat and bowing.

"Put on your hat," said Elos-Reve. "I recognize you as the man who went through the window last night. I hope you are not hurt."

"I am cut in two places, sir, but I don't think I'll die of 'em."

"Very good. I shall not put out any more of my old Persian wine if it has such effect as——"

"I beg your pardon, sir. It wasn't the wine," said Birken.

Elos-Reve smiled and shook his head.

"I didn't drink anything at all, sir."

By this time people had recognized the Boy Crœsus in the carriage and stopped to gaze at him, till quite a crowd had gathered about them.

"Come, both of you get in and ride with me," he said, "and we'll talk the matter over."

They both got into the carriage and the owner said to the driver:

"Take us through Central Park."

Then he turned to Birken and asked:

"What has become of young Eversole, who engaged a place for you? Have you seen him to-day?"

"No, sir. I expected he would call on me, but he has not done so."

"You have not received your pay?"

"Only the suit of clothes."

"Well, I'll see that you get your pay. I don't know but what it was given to him for you."

"It is kind of you, sir. I shall have to pay for the glass, I suppose?"

"No; it has already been paid for. I am very well aware that you did not break it maliciously. But what was the matter with you?"

Birken glanced around at Haviland, as if to ask how he should answer the question.

"Tell him," said Haviland, nodding his head toward him.

"Well, I was in the room when a man in a blue mask came up to me and called me by my name. I was surprised, as I had on a mask as well as he. I was wondering who he was when his mask fell off. I saw the face of a dead man, and ——"

"A dead man!"

"Yes, a man I knew was dead, sir. I couldn't stand that, and before I knew it I was going through the window."

"Well, I am sure that is excuse enough. If I should meet a dead man walking around and talking to me I think I'd break, too. But I have a very strong opinion that dead men don't do that way."

"But I saw 'im, sir."

"Who was he?"

"Justice Wales, of Liverpool, sir."

"What!" and Elos-Reve gave a sudden start. "He was drowned from the deck of my yacht."

"Yes, sir. That's what I knew, and that's why I made the break. I don't know how to be familiar with dead people, sir."

"And you didn't drink any wine?"

"Not a drop, sir."

"Was he the same one you saw, Mr. Haviland?"

Haviland nodded his head.

"You knew him alive?"

"I met him once or twice."

"And you knew him well?" turning to Birken.

"Yes, sir, for years. I lived in Liverpool all my life."

"You were an officer in his court, there, were you not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Young Eversole told me as much when he begged me to let you come on duty with him. He said you once arrested him. Is that so?"

"Yes, sir," and he squirmed like an eel as he made the reply.

"He tells a strange story—one I can hardly believe. It's a wonder he did not see the ghost of the justice, too."

Haviland was white as a sheet, and Birken was watching him

"I can't understand why you take such an interest in that young vagabond, Mr. Elos-Reve," remarked Haviland.

"Nor can I, my dear sir. He tells such a strange story that it haunts me. He even said that you appeared before Justice Wales and accused him of something for——"

"He lies!" hissed Haviland. "This man arrested him. I did not have anything to do with it. It was done without my knowledge. He is a fraud, as I wrote you some days ago, and yet you give him shelter and employment. I am at a loss to understand why you have anything to do with such people."

"As I told you, his story has haunted me ever since I heard it," said Elos-Reve, as the carriage entered the park. "I would like to have both of you hear it, as you are both heroes in it, and then——"

"I am going to have him arrested and locked up for connecting my name with his stories," said Haviland, angrily.

"Oh, he'd tell the whole story in court, then," remarked Elos-Reve.

"Nobody would believe it, and once in prison for it he's shut up."

"He says he has been in prison two years already, and it doesn't seem to make him shut up much."

"You are in league with him!" hissed Haviland, "and I'll end it here and now, you fiend of mystery!" and he reached forward and clutched Elos-Reve by the throat with both hands.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE WINNING CARD.

Elos-Reve was sitting directly in front of Henry Haviland, when the latter grasped him by the throat with both hands as they sat in the carriage.

The attack was sudden and unexpected.

Elos-Reve was pressed back against the carriage with great force. Haviland was a much larger man than he was.

But he had the presence of mind to raise both his feet and plant them against Haviland's stomach.

Braced as he was against the back of his seat, he straightened himself out and sent Haviland against the other end with a force that astounded him.

His feet pressed against his stomach and held him against the other side of the carriage, a helpless prisoner.

"Kill him, Birken!" gasped Haviland.

Quick as a flash Elos-Reve drew a revolver and said:

"Either of you move a hand and I'll fire! Hold up your hands!"

Both held up their hands.

They dared not disobey, for they had brought it on themselves.

"Take your feet off me!" groaned Haviland.

"When I choose," returned Elos-Reve. "Why did you attack me?"

"Take—your—feet—off me!"

"When I choose—and if you take your hands down I fire! Why did you attack me?"

Haviland made no reply, and in another moment he sank down unconscious from the great pressure on his stomach.

"You have killed him," exclaimed Birken, very much excited. "Let me get out. I don't want any trouble, sir. Let me get out, please."

"Keep quiet, he is not dead. I pressed a little hard on his stomach. He'll come to all right again," and he removed his feet to let the unconscious man lie in a heap on the seat.

"This is awful business, sir," remarked Birken.

"Yes, very awful. Almost as bad as that of two years ago in Liverpool, when he and you did the business for young Eversole."

"I didn't do it, sir," protested Birken.

"I believe his story, my dear sir. This man here is in such terror over the idea of the truth coming out that he tried to murder me right here before your very eyes."

"I don't think he intended to do that, sir?"

"Well, I do. I don't want to have anything more to do with him. As for you, young Eversole will bring you your pay. If he can forgive you for what you and this man did to him, it's no business of mine. I was not built that way myself, though."

Just at that moment Haviland gave a groan, and came to.

Birken assisted him to sit up in his seat, and he opened his eyes and glared at the young millionaire.

"Do you still wish to choke me?" Elos-Reve asked him.

"I—I—forgot myself," he stammered in reply.

"No doubt. Why did you attack me? I can't understand it. What have I done?"

"You have exasperated me beyond endurance by seemingly giving credence to the stories of that young vagabond, and using him against me and Mr. Eversole.

"I have given some credence to his story, but it was more on account of your failure to explain some portions of it, rather than from anything he had said. But I have not used him against you at all. I've never said a word to anybody about him or his story save to you two. Now, I don't want to have anything more to do with the matter. I don't care to be mixed up in any of your affairs. Come back to my hotel and let's settle the matter forever over a bottle of old wine. What say you?"

"I am willing," said Haviland.

"So am I," remarked Birken.

Elos-Reve ordered the driver to return to the hotel without delay.

Half an hour later the carriage stopped in front of the hotel, and the three occupants alighted and went in.

Elos-Reve led the way up to one of the several rooms of his magnificent apartments, followed by the other two.

Once in there wine and cigars were brought in by a servant and good feeling again prevailed. Several times Elos-Reve

went out of the room for a few moments, but quickly returned. After a couple of bottles of the famous Persian wine had been consumed Elos-Reve again excused himself and went out of the room.

"He is a good fellow after all," remarked Birken.

"Yes, so he is, but he is a mystery to me. I can't understand him, and the more I——"

The sentence was cut short by the opening of a door which had been kept shut all the time. And when it closed a young man whom Haviland recognized as young Eversole had entered the room.

Both Haviland and Birken stared at him, for he had been the prime cause of much trouble to both of them.

"There he is now!" blurted out Birken, on whom the wine was beginning to have effect. "Have you got my pay about you?"

"Yes. But why did you run away?" the young man replied and asked.

"Never mind about that now. I have explained it to Mr. Elos-Reve and he's satisfied. If you——"

The door opened again and Justice Wales stepped into the room.

CHAPTER XX.

A FORCED CONFESSION.

Words utterly fail in an attempt to describe the consternation that fell upon both Haviland and John Birken when they beheld the tall form of Justice Wales stalk into the room.

They both sprang to their feet.

Birken made a break for the window, but a man suddenly rose up there and barred the way. He recoiled and tried the door which led out into the large parlor of the suite. But that was locked.

"Just keep your seat, Birken," said the justice. "There's no use in running away. I am not dead, as you supposed, but very much alive.

"And you, sir," turning to Henry Haviland, "had better sit down also and hear what I have to say."

"My God!" groaned Birken, as he dropped into a seat. "I can't understand it! I thought you was dead, sir!"

"Yes, and so do all my friends in England," replied the judge. "But time works wonders. It has brought us four together again, after a lapse of more than two years, in another country, and under very different circumstances. Mr. Birken, do you know that young man there?" and he pointed to young Eversole, as he asked the question.

Birken glanced at him, though he was trembling like a leaf and white as a sheet.

"Yes, your honor," he replied.

"You brought him before me one night in Liverpool for committal under a life sentence, did you not?"

"Hold on, there!" cried Haviland, springing to his feet. "Don't you answer any questions here, Birken. He is not in Liverpool now. This is New York, and he has no right to arraign you here for anything you did in England."

"Oh, indeed!" said young Eversole, confronting Haviland. "This is New York, it is true. There is an officer outside that door here with requisition papers that will soon take him back to Liverpool, and they will be served on him at once if he does not answer the questions the justice puts to him. He must tell the truth, too."

"I suppose you have an officer waiting outside for me, too?" said Haviland, with a sneer.

"Your supposition is correct," returned young Eversole. "There is no escape for you except in telling the truth. The truth is what I'm after, and the truth is what I am going to have, or Henry Haviland will sleep in the Tombs to-night charged with a crime that will make his best friends repudiate him."

"Do you charge me with crime?"

"Wait and see. Now, judge, you may go on with your questions."

"John Birken," said the judge, turning again to the Englishman, "you had that young man before me one night in Liverpool for committal to a life sentence, did you not?"

"He was never sentenced, your honor," said Birken.

"I am well aware of that fact. But you led me to believe that he was, and that you wanted his committal papers from me in order to take him to prison, did you not?"

Birken hesitated.

"If you go back to Liverpool you will know what will be done with you," remarked the justice.

"Yes, your honor, I did deceive you. He had never been tried or sentenced."

"And yet you told me he had."

"I did, your honor. I gave you the name of one who had been convicted and sentenced."

"Why did you do that?"

Birken cast an uneasy glance at Haviland, who sat like a statue in his chair.

"It is answer or take the consequences," said the justice.

"I was paid to do it, sir," said Birken, in a very husky tone of voice.

"So I supposed. Men don't do such things, unless bribed. Who paid you?"

"Mr. Haviland."

"How much did he pay you?"

"Two hundred pounds, sir."

"What became of the prisoner whose place he took?"

"He came to America with Mr. Haviland. I don't know where he is now."

"Do you know Mr. Haviland?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is he present?"

"Yes, sir. That man there is he," and he pointed to Haviland.

"Very good. Mr. Haviland, you were an identifying witness when this young man was brought before me for committal. Have you any explanation to make in regard to the matter."

"That depends," replied Haviland, looking up at the jus-

tice, "upon whether any explanation I may make here will be used against me in legal proceedings. In that event I shall say nothing whatever."

"Legal proceedings will depend upon the explanations you make," said young Eversole. "The chain of evidence against you is perfect—not a flaw in it anywhere. It will go easier with you to tell the truth now, for the millions of Elos-Reve are behind me and at my command. It may be that when the mystery is explained, there will be no legal proceedings. But I am going to unravel the mystery, even if a million dollars has to be spent to do so. I have enough against you to send you to prison for a term of years, and whether I shall proceed depends upon what you say this day."

Henry Haviland was the worst broken-up man ever seen in New York. He saw no means of escape from the peril that threatened him. He saw that the millions of Elos-Reve were arrayed against him, and that even the judge of the English court was his accuser. Once before a court in England on such a charge, no power on earth could save him from a terrible sentence.

All that flashed through his mind as he sat there and gazed at the youth he had so foully wronged.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" the justice asked.

"I'll explain the matter," he replied, his face the color of a dead man's.

He seemed on the point of falling in a faint, so ghostly in in the face did he appear.

"Sit down and wait till you feel better, sir," suggested the justice, who remembered having once seen him fall down in a swoon.

Young Eversole passed out of the room and was gone some two or three minutes ere he returned. He had in his hands a bottle of wine and a glass.

"Take a glass, sir," he said, as he set them on the table near where Haviland sat. "You will feel better."

The wretched man poured out a glassful of the generous wine and drank it down at a gulp.

"Where is Elos-Reve?" Haviland asked.

"He has left us to settle this among ourselves," remarked the justice, looking toward the young man.

"Yes," said the latter. "He doesn't want to be mixed up with it any more than he can help."

"Well," said Haviland, turning and facing young Eversole, "your uncle Conrad was at the bottom of all the trouble."

"Indeed! Don't accuse one who cannot defend himself."

"I do not. Your parents are dead. Your mother had a brother who went to India when she was but a child. He died nearly three years ago, leaving her a fortune of something like three million dollars. She being dead, it fell to you as her only child. Being a minor your uncle was your guardian, and he took out the necessary papers to secure it for you. He was to hold it in trust for you till you became of age. His own affairs had become quite tangled, and he made up his mind to get rid of you in such a way that your fate would remain in doubt for years. As long as it was not known that you were dead the trust could remain in his hands, and he could reap the benefit of the use of such an immense sum of money indefinitely. He came to me and proposed that I go abroad with you, and either get you to go to sea in some whaling vessel, or else take you to some part of the world where you could be kept for years. You knew nothing about the fortune that had been left you, and you signed the papers without really knowing that they had a financial value to you. When I got to Liverpool I accidentally met Birken in the bar-room of the hotel, and during a conversation found out how the prisoners were tried, sentenced, and sent away. The next day I met him again and offered him a thousand dollars to substitute you for a prisoner who was to be committed to serve a life sentence of solitary imprisonment. It was easily done, as you know. The judge was deceived, you were sent away, and I returned to New York with the story that you had run away to sea from Liverpool."

CHAPTER XXI.

FACE TO FACE.

Young Malcolm Eversole sat down like one rooted to his chair as he listened to the story of treachery and wrong. The diabolism of the nature that could consent to the consignment of an innocent youth to a living tomb caused him to shudder with horror. Even Justice Wales, who had seen much of the darker phases of human depravity, stood aghast at the cool recital of the story.

"Did my uncle know what had become of me?" Malcolm asked after a silence of some minutes.

"Yes. I told him just what had been done, and he gave me the sum agreed on for doing it. He said that he could hold the trust during his lifetime as long as you did not turn up."

"Now that he is missing who has charge of it?"

"I have charge of his entire estate, but I don't know how long I can hold it."

"What's the condition of the estate, at present?"

"It is in a good condition now."

"And the trust?"

"Equally as good, I think. The estate is in debt to the trust, perhaps."

"No doubt of it. Now I want you to go with us on board the Reve and reduce all this to writing."

"Why go there?"

"For reasons best known to myself. Elos-Reve has been my best friend in all this trouble. The justice is stopping there. You will be treated well and not a word of your position will reach the public unless you force me to let the public know."

"I will go," said Haviland.

"So will I," said Birken.

"I will order the carriage," said young Eversole, passing out of the room.

They both finished the bottle of wine while he was gone.

A few minutes later they went down to the carriage and

were driven downtown o a point off the Battery, where they could signal to the Reve for the steam launch.

A half hour later they were on the deck of the great yacht.

"Is Elos-Reve on board?" Haviland asked of the justice.

"I believe he is," wa the reply.

"Do you wish to see him?" young Eversole asked.

"No. I never want to see him again."

"I don't know that he will wish to see you, but that is no matter. He has left me to manage this thing in my own way. He has never doubted me in the least thing."

They went into a large room which was furnished like a palace, where young Eversole told them to sit down.

"Now, judge, do me the favor to sit down at that table there and write out the confessions of these two men just as you have heard them. They will sign them in the presence of witnesses when you have finished them. Here's pen and paper."

Justice Wales sat down at the table and began to write, and young Eversole turned and went out.

In another room he summoned the steward and said:

"I want to see the prisoner in this room. Bring him up at once."

The steward turned away to do his bidding, and young Malcolm Eversole sat down to await the coming of his uncle.

He did not have to wait long.

The steward soon returned, follow by Conrad Eversole, who looked pale and ill.

The prisoner stopped and glared at the youth.

"You are Uncle Conrad," said the latter, rising and looking him in the face.

"Yes. You are my nephew Malcolm, are you not?"

"Yes. You didn't expect ever to see me again, did you?"

"Oh, yes," and he dropped into a chair. "Haviland told me that you had run away to sea, and I knew you would turn up again some day. When did you get back to New York?"

"Did Mr. Haviland tell you that I had run away and gone to sea!" he asked, without noticing his uncle's question.

"Yes, of course he did."

"But did he not also tell you how he disposed of me? How he had succeeded in——"

"No. He simply told me that you had given him the slip and ran away to sea, leaving him a note informing him of the fact. That was all he told me, and all I could do was to wait till you would return some day, when you got tired of roving."

"What have you done with the fortune left me by my uncle in India?"

"It is all secure," was the cool reply.

He had evidently made up his mind that the youth knew something of it.

"I am very glad to hear that. I suppose you are ready to turn it over to a guardian of my own choosing?"

"Oh, yes. I'd be very glad to get rid of it."

"The big sum you gave Mr. Haviland—did it come from your money or mine?"

"I never gave him any big sum of money?"

"Didn't you give him a big sum for letting me run away from him in Liverpool, when he came back to New York?"

"No, nor at any other time."

"Well, he says in his confession that you did."

"Confession?"

"Yes. He has confessed all—everything, and is in the next room there with the judge preparing to sign the confession in writing."

As he spoke young Malcolm pointed toward the door of the room in which Justice Wales was writing out the confessions.

The next instant the prisoner rose to his feet and rushed through the door, crying out:

"Haviland! Haviland! Death to you if you betray me!"

CHAPTER XXII.

ELOS-REVE DROPS HIS DISGUISE.

The sudden interruption caused Justice Wales to drop his pen and stare at the intruder.

But the effect on Henry Haviland was electrical.

He sprang to his feet, and exclaimed, in startled tones:

"Mr. Eversole! Where have you been?"

"I have been a prisoner on board this vessel. If you betray me, I will kill you?" and Conrad Eversole seemed to be beside himself with excitement.

"I have not betrayed you, sir," said Haviland, trying to soothe him. "They are in possession of the whole story, and we are in their power."

"In whose power?"

"Your nephew, backed up by Elos-Reve. There sits the English judge on whom I imposed, and there is the English officer whom I bribed to put Malcolm in place of a convict. They know it all and I am a prisoner as well as yourself. I had feared you were drowned, as your absence is a profound mystery to your family and friends."

At the recital of all this, Conrad Eversole was utterly overwhelmed.

He sank down in a chair and glared at the justice and Birken. Then he glared at his nephew as if he would like to rend him. He was not a man to give up easily. He would not surrender as long as he had a shot to fire.

"What right has an English judge to try anybody in this country?" he demanded.

"None whatever," said the justice. "I am here simply as a witness—not as a judge."

"Well, you never saw me do anything."

"No."

"Uncle, a prisoner you will remain till justice is done," said Malcolm Eversole, facing his uncle boldly. "I have warrants for your arrest on several charges, but am not going to push them until I find out whether or not you are willing to surrender my inheritance. Otherwise you sleep in the Tombs to-night. Now what will you do?"

"I will do nothing till I have consulted counsel," he replied.

"Do you want the public to get hold of the villainy of this case?"

He was silent.

"If so you can have your counsel, and I'll send you up to the Tombs with the warrants. I have the millions of Elos-Reve at my back and can give you the full benefit of the law. In that case I will show you no mercy."

"I am not asking for any mercy, am I?"

"No, but you will ask it before I am through with you," and the face of Malcolm Eversole changed to implacable marble in its expression. "Steward, lock him up again."

The stalwart steward advanced and laid his hand on his shoulder.

He angrily shook it off.

"Put the irons on him!"

Two men suddenly appeared and seized him.

The struggle was brief, and in the end the irons were on his wrists.

"Now lock him up and leave them on him. From this moment I'll show him no mercy!"

They dragged him toward the door of the cell.

"Malcolm! One word!" he called out to his nephew.

"What is it?"

"We can settle this matter here."

"Never! It goes to the courts now, and you will go to prison. It is too late now. Away with him."

They dragged him away and locked him up.

Turning to Haviland, Malcolm Eversole said:

"Your safety now depends on telling the truth in court."

"And that means my downfall in a social and financial sense."

"Yes, of course. I did not so intend, but since Uncle Conrad has shown that he has no heart I intend to give him his full deserts as far as the law will reach."

Haviland bowed his head and wept. He was utterly crushed, for he had indulged in the hope that he would be able to come out of the trouble without the facts becoming known to the public.

"My punishment is greater than I can bear," he finally said. "I would rather die than meet it."

"You will think better of that, I hope," said young Eversole. "If my uncle had shown the least disposition to undo the wrong he had done me, I would have permitted him to go free on his making over the trust of my inheritance to someone else."

"He may do so yet."

"It is too late. The iron has entered my soul. I shall show him no mercy."

"He is of an impulsive, irascible temperament, you know. He will apologize to you."

"It is too late. I am going back to the city to arrange for his arrest and lodgment in the Tombs."

He entered the steam launch, and a half hour later he was in the office of a firm of the ablest lawyers in the city. He paid a big retainer fee and then told his story.

The lawyers were dumfounded. They could not believe the story. But when he told them that Conrad Eversole was alive and a prisoner on board the Ree—that Haviland and the English officer had confessed—they no longer doubted him. They went to work at once and procured a warrant for Eversole's arrest, and it was placed in the hands of a deputy sheriff to serve.

The sheriff went back to the yacht with him.

"Wait in my room till I see Elos-Reve," said Malcolm to the officer when they went on board.

He went into another private room, and was gone a half hour or more.

At the end of that time Elos-Reve, he dark-featured young millionaire, came out and greeted then all pleasantly.

"You have come to take Mr. Eversole up to the city, I understand?" he said to the sheriff.

"Yes, sir," was the reply. "I have a warrant for his arrest."

"Take a seat, and I will have him brought in."

Justice Wales, Haviland, and Birken were present when the steward brought Conrad Eversole into the room.

The irons had been removed.

"Mr. Eversole," said the sheriff, "I have a warrant here for your arrest. You must go with me to the sheriff's office."

Eversole seemed to be almost paralyzed with horror. He glared at Justice Wales, and then at Elos-Reve.

"Where is my nephew?" he asked, in husky tones.

"I am here, Uncle Conrad," said Elos-Reve, stepping forward and confronting him.

"Eh! What?" gasped the prisoner, staggering back as if from a blow.

Haviland and Birken sprang to their feet in amazement, also, and glared at him.

"Yes," he said, "I am your nephew. I am Malcolm Eversole. By the use of certain chemicals I change my complexion at will. Elos-Reve is my proper name reversed. You can now understand how I came to take an interest in the story of Malcolm Eversole."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE END OF CONRAD EVERSOLE.

Had the great yacht suddenly began to sink to the bottom of the bay, the little party in the room of the young millionaire could not have been more astonished than they were when they heard the short, terse revelation that fell from his lips.

Conrad Eversole sank down into a chair and glared at him, while Haviland seemed again on the point of giving away to an attack of nervous prostration. As for John Birken, he was so utterly broken up that he gave a groan and dropped back into his seat in a helpless sort of way.

"You have played your game well," said his uncle, still glaring at him.

"Thanks. I cannot hope to rival you and Mr. Haviland at playing games you played successfully for two years, and I was the victim. It is my game now."

"Are you going to push it?"

"Yes. Why not?"

"Because you have already won. I am willing to comply with your demands."

"It is too late. You sneeringly informed me that you did not ask for any mercy at my hands. You won't get any. I am going to push you to the wall—behind prison walls. You are the most heartless villain I ever met with or heard of. Mr. Sheriff, you can take your prisoner."

The sheriff advanced and laid a hand on his shoulder.

"Come," he said.

He rose to his feet.

A wild, fierce light gleamed in his eyes.

Another sheriff came in and arrested Haviland at the same time. The latter was not surprised. He had been expecting it.

"Come, we must be off," said the sheriff, leading the way.

They followed him out on deck and to the spot where a stairway led down to the steam launch.

Suddenly, and ere anyone could interfere to prevent, Conrad Eversole made a break and sprang overboard into the sea.

"After him, men!" yelled Captain McLeod. "Catch him when he comes up again!"

"A thousand dollars to the man who saves him!" cried the young millionaire.

A dozen seamen sprang overboard and swam around in eager search for the would-be suicide.

A minute passed—sixty painful moments to those on board—and nothing had been seen of him.

"He must have gone under the ship!" cried the captain. "Man the lifeboat and follow the tide."

The order was quickly obeyed.

Five, ten, fifteen minutes elapsed, and then his body was found floating with the tide some hundreds of yards away.

He was dead.

They did all that men could do to resuscitate him, but in vain He had cut off the case against him, and gone before another court from whose decision there could be no appeal.

"I didn't expect to see it end this way," said Malcolm Eversole, as he saw the dead body of his uncle brought up on deck.

"It is horrible!" said Haviland, with a shudder. "I wish I had the courage to do likewise."

"It would have been better for you if you had the courage to do right instead of wrong," said Malcolm.

"It is too late now. The die is case. I wish I were even as he is."

The sheriff who had him in charge took the precaution to watch him closely to prevent him from following the example set by his chief in crime.

The body was carried to the city in the steam launch, together with the other prisoner.

The news flew like leaves in the wind, and a great crowd soon gathered. It was the greatest sensation the city had seen in many a year.

Conrad Eversole and Henry Haviland were prominent factors in the commercial circles of the city, and when the story of their crime against young Eversole became known it seemed so unreal that thousands shook their heads and refused to believe it.

But there he was—the nephew of the dead man—the young Boy Crœsus, whose enormous wealth had thrown a glamour over him for months. Reporters crowded about him to hear his story. He would tell but so much as could be corroborated by Justice Wales, whose story also startled people on both sides of the Atlantic.

The body of the drowned man was buried in Greenwood Cemetery, and Henry Haviland, rather than go to trial, pleaded guilty and was sent to prison for a term of years.

Experts in such matters were appointed by the court to settle up the trust matter, and months were spent in the work.

John Birken, having committed no crime in this country, was released, and he disappeared from New York. He was never again seen by any of his old friends either there or in Liverpool.

While waiting for the experts to settle up the inheritance left him by his uncle in India, the young millionaire prepared to return to Liverpool, to restore Justice Wales to his people.

The story of his imprisonment on board the Reve had been sent over there to read so as to make people believe it a part of the plot he had entered into with the victim of the uncle's conspiracy for the purpose of unraveling the mystery.

Some believed the story and many doubted it. But be that as it may, his friends were all glad to hear that he was alive again and coming back.

He knew that a successor had been appointed to fill his place on the bench. But he did not care for that. He had been paid a fortune by the Boy Crœsus by way of compensation, and he was satisfied.

To make the voyage a pleasant one he invited a number of ladies and gentlemen to make up a party for the trip.

Of course, none refused.

The Millman and Denton families were among the guests. Miss Millman and Miss Denton were rival belles, and they both angled as belles never angled before to captivate the young millionaire.

He was no longer dark as a Hindoo. He was now fair and unreserved—a very pleasant, sociable companion. As to the rival belles, he divided his attention equally between them.

When they reached Liverpool an immense crowd of the justice's friends met him at the dock. They cheered him again and again, and then called for the young millionaire. He appeared, bowed and retired.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCLUSION.

The curiosity of the crowd to see the Reve and the young millionaire forced the authorities to keep a squad of police at the dock all the time to keep them back. The romance that surrounded him made many people crazy to see and talk with him.

Of course, the authorities set detectives at work to ferret out the guilty ones who had taken part in the crime of sending an innocent man to serve a life sentence in prison.

The two turnkeys who conspired to help Birken had fled when they heard that the truth was known. Nobody knew whither he had gone, so there was no one to arrest. It was easy enough to locate the prison as the old Castle of Wick on the northeast coast of Scotland. The escape of four prisoners through a rent made in the old stone wall by a thunderbolt was well known, and now the people heard of the singular escape from the lips of one of them.

He told it with a graphic force that startled those who heard it.

"But what became of the others?" he was asked.

"They perished on a raft at sea," he replied.

"Where did you land?"

"Up on the wild coast beyond John O'Groot's point."

"Where did you get your riches?"

"That is my private affair. I am going to keep that secret till such time as I may see proper to reveal it," and thus the great secret remained a mystery to all the world.

When the Reve had been a week in port, Malcolm Eversole suddenly told his guests that he was going to be absent a day or two, telling them to feel at home—as Captain McLeod was really their host, and would look after their comfort.

Then he took the train for the old town of Plymouth, where he landed in the evening. He put up at a hotel, but lost no time in calling on Edith Horworth, the daughter of the old prisoner in the castle of Wick.

She was now residing in one of the finest residences in the old town. A servant answered the knocker, and gave him a stare as he asked if Miss Horworth was at home.

"She does not receive strangers till she knows their names and their business."

That was what she said, and he thought the young lady was indeed fast progressing in the art of playing aristocrat.

"Tell her the young sailor has come back," said he to the servant, "and that will be name enough."

She shut the door in his face and went away.

Just two minutes later he heard footsteps running to the door.

It flew open, and the bright face of Edith appeared.

She extended both hands to him, her face flushed and eyes beaming.

"Oh, I am so glad to see you!" she cried. "Come in and welcome a thousand times," and she almost dragged him into the house.

"Ah! This welcome is delicious," he said. "I'd sail around the world again to get it."

He was in sailor's dress, and his skin was again tanned, as if he had been sailing before the mast ever since he saw her last.

He looked at her from head to feet, and saw that she looked every inch a well-bred lady.

"What a fine lady you have become since I saw you last. You'll be very much ashamed of the poor sailor boy now, I fear."

"When I am ashamed of you may I die the next moment!" she exclaimed. "Ashamed of you, who gave me all I have! You, who could have kept all my riches for yourself, and I never any the wiser. May Heaven desert me when I forget you."

"Ah! You have uttered the sentiment of my heart—may Heaven forget me when I forget you! The poor sailor has been across the ocean without his heart!" and he looked her straight in the eyes as he spoke.

"But he had mine with him," she replied, blushing rosy red in the face.

"Did I? Then I'll keep it," and he caught her in his arms and kissed her. He then told her his love, and the story of his great riches.

"In a few days my ship will come here and you and your maid must come on board, with your teacher, for a trip round the world. There are a number of ladies and gentlemen on board now, all rich and aristocratic people. They will receive you gladly because you are my guest, but the young ladies would hate you if they knew we were engaged. Keep the secret, and the voyage will be one of unbroken pleasure. When we are married we will live in New York and have villas in the country and on the seashore."

He spent two days there, and the more they saw of each other the deeper their love grew. They had both fallen in love at first sight when they first met, and absence had increased it with both.

When he joined his guests on board the Reve again it was to inform them that a number of English friends would go with them on a voyage round the world.

They all agreed to go too, except three, who could not spare time.

A few days later the Reve dropped anchor in Plymouth harbor, and the steam launch went for Miss Horworth.

She came on board and was introduced to the others, who received her with great cordiality. Her apartments were the finest on board.

During the trip around the world no one on board suspected the engagement of the young millionaire to the English girl. They did not marry till they reached New York, and then it was the great event of the season.

They now live in New York, Paris, and Newport, and are as happy as they are rich. Their strange history is now given to the world for the first time—but Malcolm Eversole is still known as the American Boy Crœsus.

THE END.

Read "THE SEVEN WHITE BEARS: OR, THE BAND OF FATE," a story of Russia, by Richard R. Montgomery, which will be the next number (363) of "Pluck and Luck."

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